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THE GYPSY DETECTIVE.

By OLD SLEUTH.

A SERIES OF THE MOST THRILLING DETECTIVE STORIES EVER PUBLISHED.

No. 23 | SINGLE NUMBER. | GEORGE MUNRO'S SONS, PUBLISHERS, 17 TO 27 VANDEWATER ST., NEW YORK. | PRICE 5 CENTS. | Vol. II.

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## BY OLD SLEUTH.

**Gray's face became deathly white, and his lips quivered as he said: "I will sign the papers."**


NEW YORK: GEORGE MUNRO'S SONS, PUBLISHERS,
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# THE GYPSY DETECTIVE

## Or, ALWAYS JUST IN TIME.

### By OLD SLEUTH.

### CHAPTER I.

A BEAUTIFUL but terrified face was pressed against the grated door of a cell in the Tombs.

The agony which convulsed those delicate features did not in the least detract from their loveliness.

The wild, terrified glare of the eyes did not hide the fact that they were brilliant and beautiful.

The beautifully arched eyebrows traced upon the fair forehead were as exquisitely curved as though penciled by a master-hand whose study had been to make them perfect.

The long eyelashes fringing the eyelids, and which were moistened with tears, added a still greater charm to the general loveliness of that countenance whose expression was one of pain, terror, and suffering.

The face belonged to a young girl not more than seventeen years of age.

Her form, as seen through the grated door, was slender and symmetrical; the plain garb that she wore failing to conceal its elegance and grace. And this beautiful creature was in the damp precincts of a cell, behind bolts and bars, like a common felon.

Presently the matron of the prison passed along the corridor. Then in piteous tones the lovely prisoner exclaimed:

"My dear, good woman, will you please to come here one moment?"

Upon hearing the prisoner's call, the matron stepped to the door of the cell, and the instant her keen, experienced eyes fell upon the young girl within, she felt that she was gazing upon no common felon.

Instantly the ordinary severe look vanished from her face, the usual harshness of her voice was supplemented by tones of gentleness as she said:

"Did you call me, dear child?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?

"Is there any way for me to convey word to my friends?"

"Have they not already been informed of your arrest?"

"No! no! Oh, merciful Heaven, spare my poor mother!" cried the prisoner, as she clasped her hands and dropped upon her knees before the iron door. "Oh, spare her! spare her!" she continued, in a beseeching tone, "until word shall be brought to her of my whereabouts."

A tear moistened the eye of that stern matron of the prison as she inquired:

"When were you arrested?"

"Last evening, just after having delivered some work to the proprietor of the shop by whom my mother and I are employed."

"On what charge were you arrested?"

"On the charge of having stolen work that was given us to make up."

"And are you guilty?"

"Guilty!" came the reply, in quick tones, as the beautiful prisoner stepped back from the iron door, and drew her figure to its full height, while the look of woe which had rested upon her face was succeeded by a flash of indignation. "No, ma'am, we never appropriated a thread that did not belong to us."

"It's strange, then, that you should be arrested. On what did they base their charge?"

"Madam, I do not know. We have received but two or three parcels of work from our present employers. Last evening I returned the last that we had received; and when I handed in our book, and demanded pay, for we have never been paid one cent, the man kept the book, and said to me:

"'We will pay you when you return the rest of the work that you have out.'

"I told him that we had delivered all that we had received; thereupon he called me names too vile to repeat; and before I recovered from my surprise and terror, a rough man, whom I had never seen before, suddenly stepped forward, and rudely placing his hand upon my shoulder, told me that I was his prisoner."

"Did you really return all the work that had been given you?"

"Every thread!"

"Well, my dear child, you need have no fear for the result. The judge is a keen man; he has had a great many of these cases, and his sympathies are naturally on the side of the accused. These wicked men will have to make out a strong case, if you are found guilty."

"But my poor mother?"

"I will see, child, that word is sent to your mother."

Her receding footsteps could be still heard along the stone corridor, when a tall, sleek-looking man, with rather comely features, on which rested a bland and pleasant smile, stepped up before the cell door.

"Bertie, my dear child," said the man, as a tear rolled down his cheek, "I am sorry to see that this misfortune has come upon you."

"Mr. Gray," replied the girl, in spirited tones, "I do not desire your sympathy."

"My dear child, you must confide in me if I am to help you; you must plead innocence before the judge, but you must not attempt to deceive me, if you expect me to get you out of the scrape."

"I do not wish your assistance. I would rather rot in this prison than to receive the least favor at your hands. You will oblige me by going away. I have friends who will be here in time to render me all the assistance I need."

"Yes, a friend is here now; and thank Heaven, I am *just in time*, Miss Lander, to save you from any further annoyance at the hands of this old snake-in-the-grass!" and the speaker pointed to the respectable old gentleman whom the prisoner had called Mr. Gray.

The new-comer was a youth of singularly striking appearance. His hair, which was worn long, was jet black, and straight as an Indian's, while his complexion was as tawny and dark as a gypsy's.

His eyes were glittering black, and as their glance roamed restlessly from object to object, they betrayed the fiery energy of his nature.

His features were as finely cut as a woman's; his mouth small, and his teeth as white and regular as two rows of pearls.

His hands and feet were small, and his form, though not really muscular, was so symmetrically developed that he would prove a dangerous adversary.

"Who the devil are you?" growled Mr. Gray, his usual bland smile receding from his

face, and being followed by a fierce, threatening look.

"I am one of the friends whose services this young lady, the innocent victim of a pack of designing scoundrels, will accept."

"Oh, Philip!" exclaimed the prisoner; and hesitating and blushing, she repeated: "Oh, Mr. Tremaine! I am so glad that you have come! How did you find out that I was here? and does mother know that I am safe?"

"I have but just learned of the outrage you have suffered. I have dispatched a messenger to your mother."

"In what relation do you stand to this young lady?" inquired Mr. Gray.

"That is none of your business, Mr. Bartley Gray."

"Ah! then you know who I am?"

"We have met before."

The dark-faced young man spoke these words, emphasizing them with a strange significance.

"I can not remember having seen you before, young sir; and before you assume to proffer your friendship in advance of mine, you will please understand that for years this girl and her mother have been the recipients of my bounty. Had it not been for me, they would have been in the poor-house."

"That is a falsehood," replied the young man, abruptly.

"Look here, my young friend," exclaimed Mr. Gray, his usually sallow face turning purple with rage, "if you don't measure your words when addressing me, you'll get yourself into trouble."

"I don't fear you."

"You'll learn to if you interfere with me; furthermore, you just disputed my assertion. I appeal to this girl herself, whether or not I have been her mother's friend for years."

"I will save Miss Lander the trouble of answering your question, by affirming that I know just how far you have been their friend, and just how far you have been their enemy—and the latter you have been—their cruel, relentless, fiendish enemy."

The look upon Mr. Gray's face was perfectly terrible, as he fairly hissed:

"If you know me so well, you know that I am a lawyer, and a dangerous man when aroused."

"I know that you are a lawyer—but you are not dangerous to those who know what a scoundrel you are."

Up flew Lawyer Gray's cane, and with terrible force it descended toward the daring young man's head, who had thus boldly denounced him; but the latter jumped aside in time to avoid the blow, and with the quickness of a flash the cane was wrenched from the infuriated assaulter's hand.

At this instant the matron came hurrying along the corridor, with a tray in her hands.

The latter had witnessed the attempted assault, and as she drew near she inquired, excitedly:

"Gentlemen, what means this fracas?"

Calling the matron by name, Lawyer Gray replied:

"It means that this black faced rascal has grossly insulted me, and I shall chastise him for it."

"You are liable to arrest, Mr. Gray."

"Madam, you know who I am. I am not likely to proceed beyond the pale of the law."

"You have committed an assault upon an officer, sir; that is a grave offense."

"Is this young man an officer connected with this prison?"

"No, sir; this gentleman is Mr. Philip Tremaine, the detective."

Lawyer Gray started upon hearing this statement; the flush of rage which had reddened his features faded away, and an ashen pallor overspread his features as he exclaimed, involuntarily:

"Ah! ha! this is the Gypsy Detective, is it?" Then turning toward the young man, whom a moment before he was about to assault, and assuming his usual pleasant smile, he added:

"You must excuse me, sir; not having met you before, I did not know who you were."

"There's where I have the advantage of you. I know pretty well who you are."

"It is strange that you should pretend to know me."

"My profession makes me acquainted with many scoundrels, to whom, for professional reasons, I do not introduce myself until I am called upon. Then I am usually 'just in time.'"

"If you were a thousand times a police officer, you shall not be permitted to address such epithets to me with impunity. I am a man well known in this community. No one has ever before dared to question my standing as a man of honor and respectability."

"Look here, Lawyer Gray, you told me a moment ago to measure my words before addressing you; I have fully measured what I am about to say. You are not the first villain who has committed crime under the garb of respectability until he was unmasked! Some day *you* will be unmasked!"

"Will you return my cane, sir?" said Lawyer Gray, in tones of suppressed passion.

"Certainly," replied the Gypsy Detective, and he returned the walking-stick, with the remark:

"As you are a lawyer, you should know better than to attempt an assault upon strangers, *It is not lawful.*"

There was an aggravating irony in the detective's tones. Turning toward the prisoner, who had been a witness of this exciting scene, Lawyer Gray said:

"I came here to offer you my services as counsel, but my intended kindness has been requited with insult and abuse. I would have been your and your mother's friend, but now it would not be strange if I were tempted to become your enemy."

"And murder the rest of the family!" said the Gypsy Detective, in a low whisper of terrible distinctness.

The lawyer's countenance became perfectly ghastly as he moved a few steps away, and then turning, and raising his clinched fist, said:

"I don't know who you are, but I begin to suspect. I shall run you down, and if my suspicions prove correct, you know what to expect."

A derisive laugh rang in the lawyer's ears as he hastened away.

As the latter passed down the stone steps leading from the gloomy entrance to the Tombs, he met a veiled lady ascending them.

For an instant he surveyed her form, and then passed down, and as he made his way along Center Street, he muttered to himself:

"That was she! Aha! light is breaking in upon my mind! So, then, I and this Gypsy Detective have met at last! Now I know from what quarter I have received many an unseen and fatal blow to some of my most important schemes. Well, well! I like mysteries, and I delight in solving them.

"They say this Gypsy Detective is a wonderful man! Well, so am I! He's keen, but lacks experience, and but a boy at best! I'm keen, and have experience! We'll see; it's a game between us, one or the other must win. I have never lost yet, and it's a good card he dealt me in this game when he let me know who my opponent was."

Still muttering to himself, the lawyer turned up a side street toward Broadway, and was soon lost among the moving throng upon that thoroughfare.

## CHAPTER II.

UPON the morning of the fourth day after the above occurrence the trial of Bertha Lander was called on; she having been charged with the purloining or theft of goods confided to her to make up.

When the case of Philips & Co. against Bertha Lander was called, and the youthful and beautiful prisoner stepped forward, a murmur of surprise pervaded the court-room, mingled with whispered imprecations on the heads of those who had summoned one so beautiful and seemingly helpless to answer such a base charge.

After the responses to the usual questions, the prisoner was asked if she had counsel to defend her: her answer was:

"No."

At this instant a young man of splendid presence, light, curly hair, and spirited but kindly blue eyes, aged about two-and-twenty, arose, and in clear, manly tones, said:

"Your honor, I appear for the prisoner."

The lovely girl, standing before the bar of justice, turned and fastened her beautiful eyes, with a look of surprise, upon the face of the handsome volunteer counsel, while a rosy blush mantled her face.

At the same moment Mrs. Lander, equally surprised, arose to her feet, when the young man, recognizing her as a friend to the prisoner, handed her a card bearing the address:

"Colin Urquhardt, Counselor-at-Law."

Glancing at the card, in a voice trembling with emotion, Mrs. Lander said:

"I have no money to pay for counsel."

Laying his hand with a kindly gentleness upon her wrist, the young counselor said, cheerily:

"Madam, the prisoner shall have my services gratuitously; it will occupy but a few moments to obtain her honorable discharge. Please be seated, and allow me to act. I crave permission to do so."

As Mrs. Lander resumed her seat, Counselor Urquhardt requested the defendant to step down, at the same time pointing to a seat beside her mother.

The prosecution opened with the evidence of one of the firm, from whom it was charged that the goods had been stolen.

The evidence of the witness was direct and positive, and a cross-examination failed to weaken it.

The next witness was a clerk in the establishment, who swore positively to the delivery of the goods to the defendant, and exhibited the charge-book of the concern, affirming that the entry had been made with his own hand.

Matters looked bad for the defendant, so direct and positive was the testimony.

The counsel for the defendant subjected this last witness to a most scathing cross-examination.

The case was narrowed down to a question of identity.

Suddenly the question was asked, after the defendant had been directed to rise:

"Can you positively swear, on your oath, that this is the lady to whom you delivered those goods!"

After a moment's hesitation, the witness said:

"I think I can, although she wore a veil at the time; still I can not be deceived in her general appearance."

The admission of the fact of the veil was a lucky turn in favor of the prisoner. So skilfully did the defendant's counsel use this admission, that it was a general impression that an honorable acquittal would be the result.

The evidence of the principal in the firm and his clerk was completely nullified by the seemingly unimportant fact of the veil; and had the evidence rested there, an acquittal would have followed.

Another witness was called, and a hook-nosed, evil-faced old rascal, who gave his name as Aaron Scragg, stepped upon the witness-stand.

The testimony of this evil-faced old man told terribly against the prisoner.

He swore that he kept a store upon the Bowery, and that the prisoner had offered the very goods said to be stolen to him for sale; but that he had refused to buy them, suspecting that they had been stolen.

In spite of the villainy written upon this man's features, the defense were unable to impeach his character.

This witness swore positively to the identity of the prisoner, affirming that at the time the goods were offered to him she wore no veil.

After this witness left the stand, a young man, professing to be a clerk for the previous witness, corroborated his employer's testimony, and swore positively to the identity of the prisoner.

Still more damning evidence was subsequently produced.

The stolen goods were produced in court, and identified by Mr. Philips and his clerk; and a pawnbroker swore that the goods had been pawned at his shop.

This last witness said that the party pledging the goods was a young lady, who was closely veiled—a not unusual circumstance in his business; and, further, that from her general appearance, barring a positive view of her features, he believed that the defendant was the person who pledged the goods.

The last witness was Mr. Bartley Gray, a well-known lawyer, who bore a fair reputation.

This last witness gave, or pretended to give, his testimony with a great deal of reluctance actually wiping a tear from his cheek while speaking.

This man, in a voice trembling with emotion, swore that he had been a friend of the prisoner's mother for many years, and that, during one of

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his visits to her house, he had seen the very goods produced in court in their possessio

While this last witness was testifying, several significant glances passed between the prisoner's counsel and the Gypsy Detective, who stood near the railing dividing the audience from the space just before the judge's seat.

Amidst a silence like that which pervades a country church at dusk, the jury rendered a verdict of guilty.

The judge, who was well known as a generous-hearted man, could not do otherwise than pronounce sentence.

His voice trembled with genuine emotion, and kindly words of advice fell from his lips in pronouncing judgment.

The sentence was, nine months on the Island, and ere the echo of the judge's last words died away, two stricken women lay insensible in his presence.

Agony such as this does not always kill, and the stricken mother and daughter were speedily restored to consciousness, when the latter was led back to her cell.

It was a merciful act performed by the officer of the court, when he led the convicted prisoner away, ere her mother had sufficiently recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen, and could fully realize what was transpiring around her.

When Mrs. Lander did recover, her first agonized inquiry was:

"Where, oh, tell me where is my child?"

At this moment the Gypsy Detective, who was well known by all the court officials, leaned over and whispered a few words in her ear, when, without another word, the afflicted mother arose to her feet, and accepting the arm of the young gentleman who had acted as her daughter's counsel, left the court-room.

Upon the side-street bordering the gloomy wails of the Tombs, stood a coach.

Mrs. Lander's escort led her directly toward this carriage, and assisted her to enter, when he closed the door, and directed the driver to move away for about half a block and wait.

Agonized were the low sobs which struggled from that heart-broken mother's lips, as the coach came to a halt near the curb of the square adjoining the Tombs.

Full fifteen minutes passed, when the coach-door opened, and the stricken woman beheld the dark, stern face of the Gypsy Detective.

"Have you seen her?" asked the mother.

"I have; and I left her in a more cheerful mood than I find you."

"Oh, sir, if it were not that my poor child would be left alone in the world, I would pray that I might lie down and die!"

"And allow that villain who has injured you so irreparably already to triumph, and succeed in destroying your child?"

"But poor Bertie will be taken to that horrid Island, and I know that she will die in the foul atmosphere of that den in a few hours."

"No; Bertie is prepared now to brave whatever fate she is doomed to encounter."

"But listen," said Mrs. Lander, as again tears flooded her eyes. "What may not our enemy succeed in accomplishing when he once gets her there?"

"Mark me, Mrs. Lander!" the expression of a heroic resolution rested upon the Gypsy Detective's dark face, as he added, "your daughter will not be taken to the Island at all."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that this is my last day on the earth, or before to-morrow's sun shines your daughter will have her freedom!"

After a few moments' further conversation, the detective closed the door of the coach, and directed the driver where to take his passenger.

The vicinity of the Tombs is not a cheerful neighborhood at any time, and at night it is especially a gloomy place.

About ten o'clock on the night of the same day that had witnessed the lovely Bertie Lander's conviction, a carriage stopped at the corner of the street bordering the rear of the Tombs, and a lady, plainly but neatly dressed, alighted, instantly followed by a light-haired boy, apparently about fourteen years of age.

As the second occupant of the coach stepped upon the sidewalk, the driver inquired in a low voice, addressing the lady:

"Shall I stay here, *sir?*"

"Hush, Pat!" was the abrupt warning. "Where's your politeness in addressing a *lady* as *sir?*"

"Be gob, miss, yer right! may be it's yer *brother* I thought ye was, to be sure; but tell me, *miss*, shall I wait here, or take me stand at some more convainient point?"

"After a few moments you may come to the corner of Center Street; and, mark me, do not leave your box for an instant; and have the coach-door open; we may be in a hurry when we come back."

"I belave ye, *miss*, and ye can trust Pat Farrell in the face of the divil himself."

A few moments subsequent to the scene above related, the lady and boy who had alighted from the coach were standing in the office of the warden of the Tombs, while the latter was reading a written order which had evidently just been presented to him.

The prison officer was a stern, keen-faced man; and a suspicious expression flitted over his countenance, as he said:

"This is rather a singular affair, but I suppose it is all right."

"The prisoner we wish to see is not confined on a charge of murder," remarked the lady, in tones betraying a covert sneer.

"Well, no; if she was. I am inclined to think that I should act differently; but I suppose it's all right." And calling a keeper, the warden told him to take the lady and boy to the cell of the girl who had been convicted of *shoplifting*, and to *remain* until they retired from the cell.

A moment later the lady was shown into the cell, but the boy who accompanied her *remained outside!*

As the lady had suggested to the warden, Bertie Lander was a very unimportant prisoner, only sentenced to the Island, and the keeper did not attempt to exercise much vigilance, but seated himself upon the rail of the corridor, after having *locked the visitor and the prisoner* in the cell.

The prisoner, who was sitting on her rude bed when the visitor was admitted, arose, and uttered a low exclamation of surprise upon seeing *a lady* introduced into her cell.

But her surprise had subsided when her visitor moved up beside her and whispered:

"It is I, and you will soon be free! Thank Heaven, *I am just in time!*"

While this singular scene was occurring within the cell, *a more wonderful and startling one was transpiring without, upon the corridor; and the boy who had accompanied the lady to the prison was the chief actor in the latter.*

It was evident that no time was to be lost in the accomplishment of one of the most daring prison escapes that ever happened in the New York Tombs.

## CHAPTER III.

A MOMENT or two after the closing of the cell door, as described, the boy who had accompanied the lady, and who had remained without, approached close to the careless keeper, and, raising his hand, *pointed to a ring upon his finger*, saying:

"Are you a judge of diamonds?"

We do not wish to cast a reproach upon prison officials in general, but we must say that the eagerness with which this particular keeper leaned forward to examine the ring, indicated that the idea of a possible bribe flashed across his mind.

As he lowered his head to examine the ring more closely, the boy drew a handkerchief from his pocket with his right hand, and made a movement, as though to wipe the stone of the ring; but instead, with a coolness that was simply wonderful, he suddenly encircled the neck of the unsuspecting keeper with one arm, and dexterously clapped the handkerchief to the man's mouth and nostrils; when, like one suddenly stricken with palsy, and with a convulsive shudder, the latter sunk upon the floor of the corridor, and lay motionless.

The saturated handkerchief had done its work, and the strong man was helpless, and at the mercy of the weak and delicate boy.

The latter was not idle; the key of the cell door was quickly taken from the person of the keeper by the boy, and in quicker time than it takes to tell it, the grating swung inward, and the prisoner's visitor stepped forth.

The latter's movements were very unladylike, indeed; with the rapidity of an experienced operator, this singular person bound and gagged the keeper, so that when he returned to consciousness he was unable to make a movement or an outcry.

Every incident described was noiselessly performed, and in less than five minutes after the entrance of the visitor to the cell, everything was accomplished as far as described.

Ten minutes more passed, during which time not a sound was heard; when at length the prisoner's visitor came forth from the cell, and proceeded rapidly along the corridor, followed by the boy, and a few minutes later they issued forth from the gloomy shadows of the Tombs, and made their way toward the carriage that still awaited them.

The moment they entered, the carriage was turned about, and driven rapidly toward Broadway.

A few moments after the lady had issued from the cell and disappeared with the boy, *a man* stepped stealthily forth, and with noiseless tread, stole along the corridor, and, passing down to the court-yard, concealed himself under the shadow of a gloomy wall.

This mysteriously acting individual had hardly concealed himself, when one of the keepers, accompanied by the warden, came into the court-yard of the prison, and ascended toward the upper corridor, where the prisoner Bertie Lander had been confined.

In a few seconds a terrible oath was heard, also the voice of the warden calling for one or two of his deputies by name.

Immediately it became evident that something exciting was going on.

And such was the fact.

The warden had carelessly observed one of his deputies pass out the woman and boy, but after a moment, it appeared to suddenly strike him that all was not right, and, accompanied by one of his assistants, he started to discover whether or not anything wrong had happened.

The moment he arrived at that part of the corridor opposite the prisoner's cell, he beheld the outstretched form of the bound and gagged keeper.

The keeper was unbound, when he related, as far as he had observed, all that had occurred.

At this instant, another party joined the warden and the other keepers, when the principal prison official exclaimed:

"Hello, Gypsy! here is a job for you right to hand."

"What's up?" replied Philip Tremaine, the young man known as the Gypsy Detective, as he joined the group.

The warden told the Gypsy Detective the story of the keeper, when the former quickly remarked:

"Well, if only one lady passed out from the prison, the other one must be hiding around somewheres, waiting for a chance to leave, unobserved."

"You're right!" was the warden's exclamation, and immediately all hands set about to search for the mysterious woman, who it was naturally supposed, if the keeper's story was correct, must still be concealed somewhere in the prison.

In the meantime, while these scenes were happening within the walls of the Tombs, the carriage containing the woman and the boy had been driven to Broadway, and through that thoroughfare to the corner of Canal Street, where it was halted close to the curbstone.

Full half an hour passed, and still the coach remained at the same point, while two men descended from a gambling-den, situated on a second floor of a building, near Howard Street, and walked toward Canal.

"By jiminitti!" exclaimed one of the men, who was plainly recognizable in the glare of the street lamp, as our old friend Scragg, with iron-gray hair, a sallow complexion, and small, villainous eyes.

"You vos in bad luck," continued the speaker. "I never see such luck, Mr. Gray, vot you have to-night."

The person thus addressed was Mr. Bartley Gray, the lawyer, who was the declared enemy of Mrs. Lander and her daughter.

When thus addressed by Aaron Scragg, Bartley Gray replied with an oath:

"Yes, I was skinned out of three thousand on that last deal, and am dead broke."

"Vell, look here, Misty Gray, you got dot girl conwicted, now shust tell me what the blazes you make out of dot?"

"You infernal rascal! do you suppose I'm going to give you my secret?"

"Vell, I tot it was about time, Misty Gray; you and I have been partners now for about fifteen years. In dot time we had many nice liddle snaps togedder; it was no more than right dot you dells me all the truth."

"Oh! hang the truth, Scragg. I've got to

borrow five thousand of you, and I've got to have it to-morrow, too."

"Vell, I don't know about dot. Misty Gray; you git the piggest part of the liddle snaps, den you come around and borrow all of my liddle rake. I dink dot is about played oud."

"Why, hang it, Scragg! don't you know that I've got two hundred thousand in real estate?"

"Vell, Misty Gray, you know dot you owe me fifteen dousand already; now, you shust give my vife a mortgage mid dat fifteen dousand, den I see vot I can do."

During this conversation the two men had walked down Broadway, and had halted at the corner of Canal Street, about twenty-five feet from where the carriage previously mentioned stood.

In reply to Scragg's last proposition, Lawyer Gray said, after a moment's thought:

"Look here, Scragg, you asked me a moment ago what I was going to make by getting away with that girl? Without any explanation I'll tell you this much; I'll make a quarter of a million clear, if I can once get her in my power."

"Hoo!" exclaimed Scragg, shaking his head knowingly, "I smells a mice. Dots vare de land lays, eh? by jiminitti. Misty Gray, vy didn't you speak oud before, den I would understand?"

"You understand now all I want you to, so just make up your mind to let me have the five thousand."

"Hist!" exclaimed Scragg, suddenly seizing his companion by the arm convulsively, while his sallow features became livid, as he pointed toward the coach, and continued:

"By the rod of Moses, Gray, *did you see dot face?*"

## CHAPTER IV.

WHILE the two scoundrels were standing on the corner conversing, the inmates of the coach had remained muffled up, and engaged in a whispered conversation.

From the sense of their remarks, uttered in a low tone, it was evident that they were waiting for some party whom they expected to join them.

Thus the minutes sped by, until nearly three-quarters of an hour had passed, when their whisperings indicated that they were becoming anxious.

A hurried step was heard along the pavements, when the boy said:

"I hope he is coming now."

Involuntarily the lady leaned forward, and protruded her face partly out of the coach door window; her veil was removed, and the glare of an adjoining gaslight reflected directly upon her pale features.

It was just at this instant that Scragg seized the arm of his companion, and excitedly uttered the words with which we closed the previous chapter:

"*Did you see dot face?*"

"What's the matter? What did you see!" inquired Gray.

"By jiminitti! may I be struck blind if I didn't see de face of dot Bertie Lander shust lookin' oud from de window from dot coach door!"

Bartley Gray gave a start like a man suddenly afflicted with a terrible spasm, as he muttered, with an oath, in a low, husky voice:

"I'll see about this!"

And he walked directly up to the coach door, and thrusting his head partly through the window, inquired, insolently:

"Who's here?"

A low, startled scream of terror was the only response.

The lawyer's hand was upon the handle of the door, and he was about to turn it, when he was suddenly seized by the nape of the neck from behind, whirled around and flung violently into the street, while a heavy boot played a lively rap-tap-tap under the flying skirts of his coat, and at the same time an angry voice exclaimed:

"You old rascal! I'll scalp you with the heel of my boot if you come sticking your nose in my coach to annoy my passengers!"

The driver of the coach, who had so summarily played a lively march on the lawyer's rear, after delivering a parting kick, sprung upon his box, seized the reins, and was about driving off, when a couple of policemen, who had witnessed the fracas, rushed forward.

One of them seized the horse by the check rein, while the other stepped around by the driver and inquired what all the row was about, at the same time ordering the latter to dismount.

"I won't come down," replied the Irishman; and, at the same moment, he struck his horses a tremendous blow, evidently hoping that they would plunge free from the grasp of the policeman who held them.

The latter was not to be shaken off, but held on like grim death, at the same time calling upon his companion to arrest the driver.

At this moment, the other officer let go of the horses' heads, and running around on the outside, leaped upon the box.

A desperate struggle instantly ensued between the driver and the policeman, and in a few seconds, both rolled off the box into the street.

During this whole exciting scene, which transpired in a few moments, the inmates of the coach had remained motionless and quiet.

In the meantime, the fight continued between the Irishman and the officer.

The former, who had wrested the latter's club from him, was getting the best of the battle, when the policeman called upon his companion for assistance.

Undauntedly the driver continued the fight against both officers, while Lawyer Gray wrenched open the coach door, and thrust his hands in to drag the inmates forth, when suddenly a dark figure came darting rapidly along the sidewalk.

"Come out, I've got you; come out, Miss Lander!" cried the lawyer.

At this instant, the dark figure above mentioned had arrived beside the coach door, Lawyer Gray was jerked back and thrown upon the pavement, where he lay sprawling in the gutter.

The next instant, the coach door was slammed to, the strange man, who had thus so opportunely arrived, ran forward and seized the reins, and ere any of the party were aware of his intention, he had mounted the box, and was driving away like the wind.

The Irishman proved to be an overmatch for both officers, and as the coach dashed away, he ran and leaped on behind, just as two other officers came rushing upon the scene.

Lawyer Gray struggled to his feet, and as Aaron Scragg stepped beside him, he said, in a bewildered manner:

"What's happened?"

"Hush!" replied Scragg, in a low, warning whisper, "say nuttings. By jiminitti! dot's what I expect; dot tam Gypsy Detective, he vas like always, 'shust in time!'"

* * * * *

Twenty minutes after the coach which had been driven away at such an opportune moment, and at such a break-neck speed, was halted at one of the up-town piers on the North River side, and the mysterious driver dismounted, and came to the coach-window.

Thrusting his head partly inside, he inquired:

"Well, are you all right?"

"All right," was the reply. "Are we safe?"

"Safe for the present."

It was after midnight; the stars were hidden by clouds, and while the party stood by the carriage, quite a fresh wind arose, and occasional drops of rain indicated the advent of a cold storm; addressing his companion, the Gypsy Detective said:

"You remain here, while I go out on the pier and see if the yacht is all right."

As previously intimated, the night was very dark, and Philip Tremaine was compelled to grope his way very carefully, to avoid being precipitated through one of the numerous holes in the flooring of the pier.

He had just leaped one of these, when he landed full tilt against the form of a man, and both tumbled sprawling at full length.

The detective was the first to recover his feet, and was speedily followed by the man whom he had run against.

Judging from the fearful oath which fell from the latter's lips, it was evident that he believed that he had been knocked down purposely.

The detective was fortunate in leaping aside just in time to avoid a powerful blow aimed at his head by the enraged stranger, who followed up the assault, until Philip exclaimed:

"Hold on, there! Stand, or I'll shoot!"

The click, click of the lock of the pistol warned the man that the warning was genuine. Coming to a halt, he exclaimed, with an oath:

"What did you knock me down for?"

"I didn't knock you down purposely. I ran against you accidentally in the darkness."

"What in thunder are you doing on the pier, anyhow, at this time in the night?"

"Under ordinary circumstances, I'd tell you that it was none of your business; but the fact is, I am looking for a boatman; he was to meet me here with a small sloop-yacht."

"Then all I've got to say is, I'm the man you are looking for."

"All right! have you got your boat here!"

"I have."

"Well, just hold fast for a moment, and I'll go and bring up the passengers."

After an interval, the Gypsy Detective returned, leading Bertie Lander and her mother.

As our readers have already surmised, the supposed boy who had aided in the escape was Mrs. Lander in disguise.

Upon seeing that one of his passengers was a female, the boatman said, addressing the detective:

"We're going to have a rough night, boss."

"Well, what of it?"

"I thought I'd let you know it's going to be kind o' dangerous to run down the bay."

"Do you think you can land us at the Bay Ridge dock?"

"I think I can; but I want to let you know that it won't be a fair weather trip."

"Well, we'll have to take the chances."

After some difficulty, the party got aboard of a small sloop yacht which lay under the string piece of the pier, and a few moments later, like a spectral bark, the boat glided out on the dark waters, while an ominous wind moaned through the rigging of the shipping moored in the slip.

## CHAPTER V.

IN Wall Street, New York, just below William, toward the river, is an entrance-way leading through a large front building to a rear court.

Facing this court, are the four sides of a large building, along each story of which run several iron corridors.

Facing on these corridors, are numerous small offices, occupied exclusively by lawyers, mostly young practitioners, who have not yet won either fame or fortune.

On the door of one of these little legal cubby-holes, at the time when the incidents, we are about to record, occurred, was a small sign, bearing the legend:

"COLIN URQUHARDT, *Counselor-at-Law.*"

Into this office we wish our readers to accompany us, and they will find a handsome, blue-eyed youth, sitting at a desk, who will at once be recognized as the same young lawyer who defended Bertie Lander during her trial for theft.

The time we find this youth, thus seated in his office, was two days subsequent to the sailing of the yacht, after midnight, from a North River pier, as recorded in the previous chapter.

Young Colin Urquhardt was evidently not particularly engaged, and was carelessly thrumming with a pen on the edge of his cheap, little desk, when the office-door suddenly opened, and Philip Tremaine, the Gypsy Detective, entered.

Upon beholding this mysterious man, the young lawyer rose to his feet, and extended a cordial welcome, at the same instant saying:

"Well, my, dear sir, what news do you bring?"

"I came for news," was the sententious reply.

"First tell me, are our friends and clients safe?"

"For the present."

"It was a terrible night for a sail, when you succeeded in rescuing that girl in such a remarkable manner."

"Yes; but we reached our destination in safety, and both mother and daughter, for the present, are safe from pursuit."

"Where are they?"

"They are boarders in a house, situated on the shore road, near Bay Ridge."

"Good; and now we can go for that man, Gray!"

"We can."

"Well, you said that you had come for news?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have startling news for you, and I may safely predict that we have got Mr. Lawyer Gray 'dead to rights;' and unless he does justice in a few months, we will bring him up all standing."

"Well, what have you discovered?"

"I have made a great discovery!"

"Let me know its nature."

"First answer me one question. Can you command any money?"

The countenance of the Gypsy Detective fell, as he replied:

"I thought that sooner or later I would encounter a money obstacle. I have no money but my salary as an officer, and a large portion of that is mortgaged now, for the payment of Mrs. Lander's and her daughter's board."

"Well, don't look glum, old man; it is possible that I can bring that scoundrel to terms, without going to law."

"But who will pay you for your services, in case you fail?"

"If I fail, I will be amply paid with the consciousness of having done the best I could for a client; if I win, my client will be amply able to pay me."

"You startle me! Come, tell me quickly what you have discovered."

"I have discovered that Bartley Gray holds a very large property in trust for a certain Bertie Lander, a minor."

Philip Tremaine turned pale, as he inquired, eagerly:

"You are sure that you have made no mistake?"

"I am sure,"

"Then you have beat me. I suspected some such state of affairs, but could never fully confirm my suspicions; you have beaten me, and I am a detective whose business it is to unearth mysteries."

"Yes; but I am a lawyer, and knew just where to go to look for information"

"Now, then," said Philip Tremaine, "how will you command my services?"

"I have nothing for you to do at present. I am to keep an appointment with Bartley Gray at two o'clock. I shall let him know that I have discovered the fact that he holds his property merely as a trustee."

"Well, what then?"

"I shall demand an account of all moneys received."

"In case he refuses to render the account, what will you do?"

"I will notify him that I will proceed at once through the courts to have him removed."

"Do you suppose that that scheming rascal, who has held this property all these years, will surrender it?"

"No, I do not believe so; but I can compel him to surrender it into the hands of a trustee appointed by the court; and I can compel him or his bondsman to make good every penny that he has realized from his property."

For a moment the Gypsy Detective was silent and thoughtful; suddenly he appeared as though about to make a remark, when, checking himself, he turned upon his heel, and moved toward the door.

"When shall I see you again?" said Colin Urquhardt.

"I will see you after your interview with Bartley Gray; you will then know better the character of the man with whom we have to deal. My knowledge of him informs me that we shall have a long and bitter fight! that man will hesitate at nothing; he would shed blood with the same indifference that he would cast refuse water from a hand-basin. Through that rascal Scragg, he has a score of assassins at his beck and call. Are you a man of nerve?"

"Well, yes; I don't think that I am a coward."

"Do you go armed?"

"Always, in this city, where human life is held at such small value."

"All right. Remember, now, these words: After your interview with Bartley Gray, be on your guard against any stranger whom you may meet. You will then have shown your hand, and he will play against you. Yet I think it is better that he should know so much of the game."

In his usual abrupt manner, without another word, the Gypsy Detective left the office of his friend.

Two hours later, in a dingy rear office located in a building on Nassau Street, the man whom the Gypsy Detective had pronounced a fiend in human shape, sat reading a morning paper.

Presently the office door opened, and the two lawyers, Colin Urquhardt and Bartley Gray, stood face to face.

"Ah! you are the gentleman who made the appointment with me by letter?" said Bartley Gray.

"I am."

"Please be seated."

Colin Urquhardt drew his chair up to the table, and leaned his elbow upon it, so that but three feet intervened between the two—one of them distinguished for experience, cunning, and subtlety, while the other possessed brain, frankness, and courage.

"Well, sir," said Bartley Gray, opening the conversation, "what is the nature of your business with me?"

"You are the trustee of certain property held in trust for a minor, named Bertha Lander?"

The bland smile receded from Bartley Gray's sallow face, and a frowning look succeeded as he replied, in an insolent tone:

"What business is it of yours whether I am or not?"

"We will come to that presently; first answer my question."

"Well, I do hold certain property in trust for one Bertha Lander, a minor; what concern is that of yours?"

"Bertha Lander is my client!"

"You are a liar?"

This insulting charge fell distinctly and deliberately from the lips of Bartley Gray.

Upon being thus insultingly addressed, Colin Urquhardt moved his chair back from the table, and rose to his feet.

"Recall that epithet, or I'll smite you as I would a reptile!"

Bartley Gray was not personally a poltroon, and it is probable he would not have recalled the obnoxious epithet, had it not flashed across his subtle mind that, should their interview terminate in a row, he might fail to obtain information that might prove useful.

Policy prompted him to say:

"I spoke hastily. I will modify my remark by saying that you lie under a mistake."

The younger lawyer reseated himself, with the remark:

"Please be less hasty next time, lest I may prove equally hasty in resenting the insult; the question, whether or not I am mistaken, is my affair alone."

"I don't propose to be intimidated by you. I was a counselor-at-law when you were making spit-balls of your spelling-book; but admitting that you think you are the counsel of Miss Bertha Lander, pray tell me where your clients are residing at present?"

"That, sir, is my own secret; they are beyond the reach of your wicked schemes, and that is sufficient for me."

"Are you a lunatic, or the victim of some practical joke?"

When Bartley Gray made this singular inquiry he was as cool and self-possessed as a millionaire at his lunch.

Colin Urquhardt showed that he was angered by this insolent query, but repressed his indignation, and said:

"I came here to talk business, not to exchange badinage."

"Well, certainly, my young friend, you will understand that I must look upon you as a victim of a practical jokist, when I inform you that less than half an hour ago, Mrs. Lander and her daughter, who have been my clients for fifteen years, were in this office, and received a check from me for one thousand dollars, a portion of a stipulated sum which I pay to them annually, until Miss Bertha becomes of legal age."

When Bartley Gray made this remarkable statement, he looked his visitor straight in the eye, and not a muscle of his face quivered; whereas Colin Urquhardt recoiled with a blank look of astonishment upon his face, and actually shivered from the effects of this marvelous announcement.

"Mrs. Lander and her daughter were here within half an hour?" he inquired, in a voice husky from surprise and bewilderment.

"Yes, sir; Mrs. Lander and her daughter were here less than half an hour ago!"

Colin Urquhardt made no reply; when, after waiting a moment, Bartley Gray said:

"Come, my young friend, you must see that you have been made a dupe of, and if you will be frank with me, I will show you a way out of the dilemma."

"I have nothing to say. If Mrs. Lander and her daughter have been here and have made a compromise with you, why, I am certainly out of the case altogether."

"Mrs. Lander and her daughter have made no compromise with me, because there has never been any necessity for a compromise; there has never been any hitch in my relations with my clients."

"No hitch in your relations with your clients! Why, wasn't it your testimony principally, that convicted your ward of larceny?"

Bartley Gray settled back in his chair, and laughed immoderately; at length he said:

"I begin to see where this joke comes in. I remember now—you were the counsel of that professional thief with the angel face, who has assumed the name of Bertie Lander."

"Do you pretend to say, sir, that that lady pleaded under a fictitious name?"

"I certainly do; and if she had not been convicted of larceny, she would have been arrested before she left that court-room, upon a charge of false pretenses."

A sudden change came over the face of Colin Urquhardt; the look of bewilderment fled from his face, and was succeeded by one of keen intelligence, as he exclaimed, emphatically:

"I am a thundering fool!"

"You will admit that you have been fooled by these people."

"Yes, I admit that I have been fooled, but not by these people?"

"By whom, then?"

"By you!" was the fierce answer; "fooled, that I should for a moment believe the plausible statement of a man whom I know to be an unmitigated scoundrel!"

## CHAPTER VI.

For an instant an awkward silence succeeded these plain, startling words of the younger lawyer; these words knocked Bartley Gray's self-possession clean out of him; for a moment he was as much astonished and bewildered as his visitor had previously been; finally, he said;

"If I was not assured that you were the dupe of a pair of brazen impostors, I would resent your language by chastising you."

Colin Urquhardt quickly leaned forward, and raising his hand, struck Bartley Gray a smart blow with his palm upon his cheek.

The face of the latter turned purple, as he thrust his hand behind him, and withdrew it with a cocked revolver in his hand; but ere he could raise it, the office door flew open and the Gypsy Detective stood revealed in the passage, with a cocked pistol in his hand, the muzzle of which covered Gray's heart.

"Don't raise your weapon!" was the low, quiet command of the Gypsy Detective, as he stepped into the office, with his pistol still leveled, and kicked at the door, with the heel of his boot.

"Take that pistol away from him, Colin," said Philip Tremaine; "it is not a legal argument, when two counselors are discussing business."

There was something in the presence of the Gypsy Detective that appeared to paralyze Bartley Gray, and he offered no resistance when the younger lawyer seized his arm, and took the weapon from him.

"Now, then," said Philip Tremaine, "we will pass over this little digression, and go on with the argument."

"You scoundrels will both pay a bitter penalty for this outrage!" said Bartley Gray.

"Then it will be after you have expiated the crime of murder upon the gallows!"

"Who dares to accuse me of having committed a murder?" the purple of rage fading from his face, being followed by a deathly pallor.

"I dare accuse you of being a murderer!"

"You have honored me by calling me a murderer, pray finish your story, and tell me who had the honor to be my victim?"

"The father of your ward!"

If Bartley Gray had been suddenly stricken with the consciousness of the near approach of death, his face could not have assumed a more ghastly hue, as he gasped:

"It's false! Who are you who dare to make this fearful charge?"

"I am a member of the police force of this

city! It is my duty to bring murderers to justice, and I'll yet bring you there!"

"Go make any charge against me that you choose, but leave this office, or I shall call for assistance!"

Up to this moment, since the entrance of the Gypsy Detective, Colin Urquhardt had been silent; he now said:

"As a lawyer, Mr. Gray, you will see the advantage of learning the basis of my intended procedure against you."

"I can be a forced listener."

"Very well, let it be so; I charge you, as the trustee holding the property of one Bertha Lander, a minor, of having appropriated to your own use the proceeds of said trust property, during the past fifteen years. I now demand that, as the legal representative of Bertie Lander, you account to me for the proceeds of the property, or I shall proceed legally to compel you to do so."

"Will you listen to me, and guarantee that I shall not be interrupted or browbeaten?"

"I will listen to you and guarantee what you require."

"I admit that I am the trustee of an estate belonging to one Bertie Lander, a minor: I am aware, also, that there is a woman and her daughter, who, for a long time, have surreptitiously assumed the name of Lander. I believe these people to be acting in collusion with a convicted felon, once my clerk, to represent themselves as the real heirs of the gentleman who made me a trustee of these estates. Now, then, Mr. Colin Urquhardt, if that be your name, and you, Mr. Philip Tremaine, if that be yours, if you represent these impostors to whom I have alluded, I urgently invite you both to go to the devil, and do your worst!"

"That is your final answer?" said Colin Urquhardt.

"That is my final answer; and I do not wish to be again annoyed or pestered with any personal controversy on this subject. I will meet you in the courts cheerfully, and furnish documentary and personal evidence, confirming the unquestioned identity of my clients, as the real wife and daughter of the party from whom I received the trust, as against these frauds whom you represent."

"That settles the bill for the present," said the Gypsy Detective, as he moved toward the door, and motioned to his friend to follow him.

A moment later and Bartley Gray was alone.

Taking his cocked pistol which his visitors had left lying upon the table, he restored it to his pocket, muttering as he did so:

"Well, the war has commenced; the winning cards are mine so far. I could beat that lawyer easily, but that Gypsy Detective is worse than Satan himself! As Scragg says, he is always 'Just in time' to spoil my game! I wonder who the mysterious devil can be? he is the one who has rooted out all the information that my dupes have evidently become possessed of."

Bartley Gray rested his elbows upon the table with his chin upon his hands, and for a full half-hour remained lost in silent thought; finally he started, and his features worked with excitement, as a sudden thought seemed to flash across his mind, as he muttered, through his grated teeth:

"Can it be possible that this Gypsy Detective and my former clerk, the convicted forger, are one and the same person? By Heaven! it's possible! If it prove to be true, *I'll fix him!*"

At this moment the office door opened, and Aaron Scragg came shuffling in.

There was a significant leer upon Scragg's face, as he dropped into a chair and said, in a guarded voice:

"By Jiminitti, Mr. Gray, I shust find oud some dings,"

"Well, what did you find out, Scragg?"

"By the rod of Moses, shust so sure dot my name is Aaron Scragg, I saw dot Gypsy Detective and a vite-faced chap vot vos de lawyer mit de gal in de dombs, go down dem stairs. By Jiminitti! I bet a tousand dollar dot they vos lookin' for you!"

"Well, they found me."

"Goodness gracious! dey vos in here?"

"Den by Jiminitti! shust so sure dat you live, things am goin' to grow hot!"

"Yes, Scragg, very hot! and what we want now is a red-handed man who doesn't care whether he butchers a sheep or a human being!"

## CHAPTER VII.

"So you vant a leetle pizness mit some of te poys, den, Mr. Gray?"

"Yes, Scragg; you love money, don't you?"

"Vell, I lofe my share; dot vos goot do have money, so I find him, ven I go mit de putcher und de grocer."

"You can make twenty-five thousand dollars, Scragg!"

"Goodness gracious! Mishter Gray! dot vos a good teal of money,"

"Yes, that's a fortune; and you can make it easy enough."

"Vell, how I make him?"

"I'll speak plain; there are just three people that I want put out of the way,"

"Do you mean dot a leetle accident vot vould stop der breath? In oder words"—and Scragg hesitated a moment, and looked around furtively, and then added, while a crude, villainous look settled upon his sallow features: "*It vos a leetle shob of murder?*"

"Exactly."

"Vell, who stood in your vay, Mishter Gray?"

"The girl, Bertie Lander."

"Why—eh—yes, but dot bird has flown. You must ketch a chicken before you can cut his head off.''

"We can find her."

"Vell, who vos the next von?"

"That blonde lawyer Colin Urquhardt; he has discovered enough of my affairs to make him very dangerous."

"Vell, dot vos easy; no drouble mid dot veller, dot he go swimming to be fished out by te coroner. Who ish te next von, Mishter Gray?"

"That dark-faced devil, the Gypsy Detective."

"Vell, dot gal first we vind her, hey?"

"Yes."

"Vell, how we go to vork?"

"I'll tell you, Scragg, I'm satisfied that she's hiding somewhere in the city. I've got her photograph. I'll have a lot of copies made. You can distribute them among the lads, and offer to stake the man with a hundred dollars who will run her down."

"Dot vos a magnificent idea; de young lawyer, as I said dot vos easy, but how 'pout that chipsy? I dell you Mishter Gray, dot vos a nasty job ven you ketch that feller?"

"Where do the lads rendezvous now?"

"Vell they hav a nice little pack room up in the Eighth Ward."

"What lad are the cops looking for now?"

"Der vos several; dere vos the feller dot crack the broker's house on Lexington Avenue; den der vos the feller vot stole de ponds down in Bond Street; oh! dere vos plenty that the cops look for."

"Couldn't the Gypsy Detective be decoyed up to the rendezvous on a business lay!"

"How?"

"Just drop him a little note, that such and such a chap is going to be around at such and such a time; have the right lads on hand, and the next day there'll be another mysterious disappearance."

"Ye-e-s, dot vos a nice leetle game; but vot I said, that chipsy is up to snuff; he vos always shust in time to git in, and always shust in time to git out."

After some further conversation, old Scragg left the office of Bartley Gray, revolving in his mind a plan to earn twenty-five thousand dollars

Two days later, Philip Tremaine, the Gypsy Detective, received an anonymous note, informing him that a certain thief for whom the detectives were looking, would be at a certain house in the Eighth Ward, at a certain hour, upon a night named.

There was a large reward offered for the scoundrel indicated in the note, and for reasons well-known to the reader, a round sum of cash in hand was what the Gypsy Detective needed just about that time. Furthermore, the capture would increase his professional reputation, and advance him to the front rank for promotion.

He decided to keep the appointed tryst at the thieves' rendezvous.

Upon the afternoon of the same day that the Gypsy Detective received the anonymous note, he paid a visit to the office of his friend, Urquhardt.

He found the latter in a very exuberant state of mind.

"You appear cheerful to day," said the detective.

"Yes, my handsome policeman, I'm in luck!"

"Indeed! What good fortune has fallen in your way?"

"The best that can befall a struggling lawyer."

"Well, let me hear the good news! I am usually in the receipt of so much gloomy intelligence that a few cheerful facts would do me good."

"I've picked up a wealthy client—or rather, she's picked me up, and it's a big case; as an earnest of what's to come of it, the lady left me a retainer of a hundred dollars."

The Gypsy Detective had seated himself in a chair, and a pleasant smile which made his handsome face radiant, ripened his countenance, as he listened to his friend's communication.

When the young lawyer mentioned that it was a lady who had sought his services, a strange look flashed into the detective's eyes, the cheerful smile fled from his features, and they were shadowed by a thoughtful expression, as for a moment he remained silent, drumming carelessly with his fingers upon the lawyer's desk.

"What's the matter, Phil my boy?" exclaimed the lawyer, observing the shadow that came over the detective's face; "your cheerfulness appears to have vanished."

"Well, I can't afford to indulge in pleasant prospects long; I am like a poor girl who gazes for a moment through the pickets surrounding a rich man's garden of flowers, and, who, after sniffing their fragrance for a brief moment, is compelled to turn away and seek her cabin, where naught awaits her but labor, and odors anything but fragrant."

"Well, upon my word, I never knew that you were a sentimental cuss before."

"Yes, I have moments when I indulge a little in sentiment."

"You're a mystery, Philip Tremaine; I can't fathom you at all!"

A strange look flashed over the detective's face—a look Colin Urquhardt recollected years afterward, as the former said:

"I am a mystery! and I hope that neither you nor any other human soul will fathom my secret! But tell me, what about this client of yours?"

As the detective added this last inquiry he had reassumed his ordinary abrupt business manner.

"Well, she was a remarkably handsome woman, and kept me in a perfect flutter the whole time that she was here."

"Shall I describe her appearance to you?" said the Gypsy Detective.

"You describe her?"

"Yes."

"Why, do you know her?"

"That's just what I wish to find out."

"Well, this is odd!"

"She had dark hair, sprinkled about the temples with threads of gray."

"By thunder! old man, you got her down all right there."

"Her eyes were dark, her complexion verged toward the brunnette, her features were regular, and her smile entrancing and bewildering."

"Bah! old man, you are drawing on your fancy. You never saw her—"

"She wore diamond hooped rings in her ears, a cameo pin, with a lion's head and diamond eyes; she wore a cluster diamond ring, with a pearl as the central stone; and she had a way of drawing her eyelids partly down over her eyes when speaking."

"By the great horn spoon, Phil, you've got her down exactly! What! are you a magician—or a master of occult sciences?"

"She told you that she would like to have you visit her at her house in Twenty-seventh Street, when she would more fully explain the natnre of her business with you."

"You rascal! You were eavesdropping, and overheard every word she said during her interview with me!"

"On my honor, I have not been within a mile of your office for twenty-four hours."

"Then how did you get things down so fine?"

"Straws are maps to detectives."

"Who is that woman? Come, you've told me everything else—tell me this."

"You are going to her house you'll find out there."

"I'll be hanged if you haven't knocked me endways. I don't know whether I'd better go, or not. She may be some sorceress; she may be—she may be—"

"What?" asked the Gypsy Detective, abruptly.

The lawyer lowered his voice, and looked around furtively, as he answered:

"A confederate of the villain Bartley Gray."

The detective's tone and manner were indifferent, as he replied:

"You will find that out by keeping your appointment with her."

"Shall I go there?"

"Yes!" and the detective's voice had a warning tone in it, as he added: "Take your Derringer with you; neither eat nor drink in her house, and keep your eye peeled—a handsome woman is sometimes a beautiful snare!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

On the corner of a certain street which runs along the river, right in the center of a locality notorious for the fights, rows, and murders which nightly occur there, is situated a drinking-place, whose exterior does not differ from a similar class of places all over the city.

A bullet-headed youth is behind the bar, while seated upon chairs and barrels are several rough-looking youths, fair representatives of the type usually found in such places.

Their conversation, which was interlarded with the usual slang, was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of an old woman, with keen, black eyes, a haggard, shriveled face, whose expression was villainous in the extreme.

Advancing to the bar, the old creature reached forward a dirty-looking pitcher, and said:

"Shust give me ten cents mit beer, if you blease."

The loungers about the bar-room had not paid particular attention to the old woman until she spoke, when one of them, who had been stretched out upon a barrel, rose to his feet, and stepping beside her, gave her a thump on the back which knocked her against the bar with a terrible thud.

"Goodness gracious! by Jiminitti! why for you do dat?" gasped the old woman, knocked almost breathless by the force of the blow.

"I thought so, you old squeezer!" exclaimed the man.

"Vould you insult a lady?"

"Why, Mr. Scragg, how do you do? You old fraud! When you want to play possum, keep your mouth shut, take a reef in on your horn, twist your eyes in their sockets, and get a new set of teeth."

"By Jiminitti! den you know me, my poy?"

"Know you? Why, I'd recognize you in a tunnel."

"Goodness gracious! den I don't make a good woman."

"What are you up in those togs for, any way, you old swag-hider?"

"Vell, I tought I look around; it vos not goot for mine pusiness dot de cops see a shentleman like Aaron Scragg mit you fellers."

"Well, you're just in time, old man."

"By Jiminitti! my vriend, don't say dot vords; it makes me think of someting vot vos bad!"

"Well, put up for the rum, and we'll say nothing about it."

After a little persuasion old Scragg—for it was he in the disguise of a woman—dug out some greasy stamps from the depths of his pocket, and reluctantly laid them upon the bar in payment for drinks for the crowd.

While the party were drinking, a full-blooded Irishman, with knee-breeches and additional toggery, indicative of a recent arrival from the old country, entered the bar-room, and called for a glass of ale.

A few moments later, a ruffian called Swipy, the toad, and four other rogues came leisurely sauntering in.

Scragg did not notice the entrance of the new-comer into the bar-room, being at the time wrangling with the bar-keeper over one cent change, which the old squeezer thought he was being swindled out of.

When the momentous matter was amicably arranged, Scragg motioned the man who had first accosted him to follow into the rear room.

Seating himself at a greasy table, after closing the door of the back room, Scragg said, addressing his companion:

"Vell, mine friendt Sharkie, vot ish de order of de proceedings to-night, eh?"

"You know, I reckon, as well as I do, Scragg; but mind you, if the money don't come as soon as the job is done, we will *send you through to the eels!*"

"You haf things all fixed to make a sure go of it, eh, Sharkie?"

"The *water-chair never misses fire, Scragg;* it's won more stamps for the coroner than any other *accident-trap* in Gotham."

"Vell, I guess dot it vos not goot dot I stay here; you know de time ven dis Gypsy he comes?"

"It's between two and three in the morning, ain't it?"

"Ya-a-s, dot vos de hour; und Jackson vos to meet him and pring him down here."

"How will he be got up?"

"Like von of de gang, oh! ya-a-s, like von of de gang."

"But you will stay and see the job done, and then you will be satisfied."

"No; it vos petter dot I go."

"Oh, yes; and then you will have a chance to haggle on the money, and say you ain't sure that the job was done. You can't play that on me, Scragg; you must stay and see the job done, old man."

"Den you vill haf me mixed up in de snap, if der should pe drouble."

"Look here, Sharkie, my poy, I dells you vot I vill do. I make him two thousand tollars, and you do de shob mit out me altogeder."

"It's now half past one o'clock; you take a hand in or I will swing you over to the detective for trying to put up a job on him."

"Vot! gif me away, Sharkie?"

"Yes, as sure as ducks swim."

"Vell, den, I guess dot it vos petter dot I stay. Come, ve vill go down ver de tide comes in."

"All right, Scragg;" and as Sharkie spoke he arose from his seat, and going to the side wall touched a screw-head, and a piece of the surbase slid partly open.

The assassin shoved it still further back, disclosing an opening about a foot wide.

He then reached his hand under and slid a bolt on the under side of the floor, and two boards fell apart, and there was revealed an opening sufficiently large to admit of the passage of a human form.

"Come, old man, you know the way; go down and I will see that the lads follow."

Hesitatingly Scragg let himself down until his feet rested on the rung of a foot-ladder. Then, with evident reluctance, he descended through the dark aperture, until his head was on a level with the floor, when halting, he said:

"Dot vos all right, Sharkie, der vos no trick, by shiminetti! Dot vos a pad place down here."

"Oh! go ahead, you old fool! the lads don't croak men who owe us a thousand or two, and who never carry any money with them."

"Dot vos rights, Sharkie—dot vos piziness; you vos a nice feller, Sharkie, and you vos smart, too, ha! ha! he! he!" And Scragg descended down, down, the dark hall.

We will here state that this den, since discovered by the detectives, was the most ingeniously arranged refuge ever designed by thieves and murderers.

They had made the opening in the surbase and floor as described, and had dug down a hole far beneath the real cellar of the building, carrying their opening just beyond the outer wall of the cellar wall.

When a proper depth had been reached, they had excavated a false, or sub-cellar, leaving a braced roof of real earth above them, four feet in thickness.

They had then, also, made a second excavation, still deeper; and from the latter had run a tunnel to the river, so that through an ingeniously concealed aperture at the rise of every tide this last excavation was flooded with water.

A spring trap opened into the man-hole of death, and a chair was set over this, called the water-chair; and few ever seated themselves in that fatal chair who ever after saw the light of another sun.

While Scragg was descending, Sharkie uttered a low whistle, and soon several men came stealing into the room, which was effectually barred off from the bar-room, and descended one after the other, until all who were initiated had gone down, save those who were to remain and lay for the capture of the Gypsy Detective.

Among those who descended was Swipy the toad, and when all were down, the singular trap was closed; and not forty feet distant the unconscious pedestrians on the street moved along about their business over this mysterious death-trap.

## CHAPTER IX.

The scoundrels who contrived this fearful murder-roll, or human slaughter-house, had displayed great engineering skill.

It was ventilated by an ingenious contrivance, and supplied with gas, for which the company never received pay, as one of their mains had been tapped in a manner which precluded the use of a recording meter.

Down in this den might have been seen other ingenious contrivances, including every known burglar's implement required to crack a house or mine into a bank vault.

There was a long table also, and comfortable chairs, while a thick coating of cement walled back the dripping slime, which otherwise might have made the atmosphere too unwholesome for human inhalation.

Sharkie appeared to be leader of the gang, and occupied a seat of honor, while the rest seated themselves just where it came handy.

It so happened that Swipy, the toad, dropped into a seat on one side of the table, directly opposite to where old Scragg had seated himself.

Until they were thus seated, Scragg had not observed the presence of the Toad; but the moment his eyes fell upon him, he uttered a low, significant exclamation, and tried to catch the eye of Swipy.

The Toad looked at Scragg innocently, as though he had never seen him before.

"Gootness gra-a-cious!" muttered old Scragg, speaking to himself, "I guess dot I smells a mice! So Swipy ish come again to life! Vel, dot vos strange! I knows much, but bimeby I knows more—dot vos shure!"

Some of the cut-throats engaged in playing cards, while others passed the time, as is usual among thieves and burglars, in relating their various adventures and hair-breadth escapes.

It was with unctious delight that one after the other related how upon different occasions he had got the best of a cop.

So the time passed until an hour sped by, when Sharkie said:

"Well, Scragg, old man, I guess the cop has dropped to your little game, and has given the appointment the go-by."

"By Jiminitti! Sharkie, dot vos shust vot I tought since I found ouet somedings! I tell yer, poys, dot so longer as you lif, de morer as you found owet!"

"Well, what have you found out, Scragg?"

"Ask Swipy, the toad; I guess dot he can tell more as I kin!"

"What can I tell, old man?"

"Oh, my gootness gra-a-cious! vot an innocent poy you are! You tought dot I didn't know you, eh, Swipy? My gootness! ya-as, I know'd you shust so soon vot I see you! I say, Swipy, ven did you see the Shipsy Detective last?"

"Me see the Gypsy Detective? Why, you old fool! you must be out of your head."

"Oh, ya-a-s! I vos out mit mine hedt, su-re! you don't pe a friendt mit de Gypsy Detective, eh, Swipy? you didn't for Mister Gray, hah? Oh, no! you vos a nice leetle poy! You vos all right, ven you gif everyting away to dot Gypsy 'bout vot you learn ven you vos a clerk mit dot lawyer."

"What are you mouthing about, now, Scragg!" asked Sharkie.

"Oh, vos shust tinking shust a leetle oudt, loud dot vos all, Sharkie. De Gypsy didn't come. Vy? I dells you, Swipy vos his friendt; he gifs udder dings avay, and den he gifs dish last leetle shob avay, and comes pack mit de poys, to see vot he could findt ouet; den he gifs dot avay, unt den de whole gang he's gone up; dot vos vot I vos saying, Sharkie."

"You are an infernal old liar, Scragg, and I am going to prove you one; and then, if the lads don't give you a seat in the water-chair, my name ain't Swipy, the toad, that's all."

This startling conversation drew the attention of the whole gang toward the speakers; the game of cards was interrupted, and all other talk ceased.

"Oh, Swipy! vot a cunning rascal you vos, to be sure," said old Scragg; "but it vos lucky for the poys dot I shust dropped to your nice leetle game."

"An' it's luckier, you old traitor, that I dropped to yours. Now, see here, lads, I've got something to tell you, and I've got the proof, also. You know that a reward of ten thousand is offered for the masked burglars?"

"Yes, yes," was the answer that came in unison from the excited men.

"Well, you know that private rewards, of-

fered by the families and banks that have been robbed, swells the amount of the reward up to twenty-five thousand dollars?"

"That's so! that's so!"

"All right so far. Now, Scragg has come to you with a story that he wants to get away with the Gypsy Detective. Now, I want to ask, ain't it a little suspicious that he puts up a job to bring this detective right into the rendezvous, under the plea that he is a hard man to kill?"

"By the jumping bull-frog, Swipy, you're right!"

"But hold on, lads, wouldn't it be easy for him to have the traps opened to let the detective down, when, just at the right moment, in comes a squad of cops, and pulls the whole gang!"

"My gootness gra-a-cious, Sharkie! pe you going to let dot tam fool, dot forger, go on mit such a vild story?"

"Shut up, Scragg!" yelled Sharkie. "Did it strike you as a little strange, lads, that Scragg told you it 'vos petter to haf de whole gang aroundt,' as he had a 'nice leetle shob for de poys'?"

The scowling looks that were cast upon old Scragg when the statement, which was really true, was made, caused the old hypocrite to tremble in his shoes.

"Didn't the old traitor come around here in the dress of a woman, so as to be ready to give the signal? didn't he refuse to come down in the refuge until Sharkie compelled him to do so? and because he wasn't outside to give the signal, haven't the cops failed to put in an appearance?"

Terrible were the anathemas heaped upon old Scragg's head, as the startling probabilities of Swipy's story became clear to the minds of the gang of thieves and burglars.

"My gootness gra-a-cious, Swipy!" exclaimed old Scragg, raising his hands and rolling his eyes in holy horror, "I don't believe dat you effer vent to Sunday-school in your life, you vos such a liar!"

"You old traitor! you had better prepare to die! your time has come!"

"Hold on, poys! let me shpeak! dot Swipy vos a tam liar! ant I prove it, he vos a forger, ant a tief of de vorst kind!"

"And the rest of us are all Sunday-school scholars?" said Sharkie, satirically.

"You vos honest tieves, but dot Swipy vos not honest!"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Swipy, "but look here, lads," and he produced the very note which had been received by the Gypsy Detective, wherein the writer offered to give a certain well-known rogue away for a stipulated sum.

"Dot vos only a guy!" exclaimed Scragg, "only a plind to got him here; but look here, fellers, I vant to know how Swipy he got that note, eh! dat vos vat I ask?"

"I'll tell you, boys, how I got it! you know Lawyer Gray, the worst scoundrel in New York? well, he has got an indictment against me for one of his own rackets, because I know too many of his secrets, and he can't work his game without raking down with me, unless he gets me out of the way. It was him that drove me from this city, four years ago, and now that he finds me back, he has hired this traitor to give me away, and Scragg's thought it a good opportunity to make a clean sweep by giving up the whole gang—that's what's the matter, lads!"

"But how you got that note, Swipy?" exclaimed Scragg, his old villainous face convulsed with terrors, as it flashed over his mind that the game was going against him.

"I'll tell how I got it, the lad you sent it by has a pal, and he brought the note to me instead of taking it to the Gypsy Detective, you old fool!"

"Oh, my gootness, gra-a-cious! boys, let's go upstairs and take a trink. Dot feller's lies dey make me sick mit mie powels!"

"Oh, yes; you would like to get upstairs, wouldn't you, just about now?"

"Poys, shust come up in de bar, and I vil prove dot Swipy ish vun liar, and vun trater, undt not me."

It was a striking scene presented in that dismal hole down in the very bowels of the earth, as the pale, excited faces of the burglars shone in the dim gaslight, as they crowded around Scragg, who stood with upraised hands protesting his innocence.

And it was a still more thrilling scene when Sharkie, in a solemn voice, said:

"Scragg, you are a traitor! *The tide is rising*, and your time has come! *The coroner is waiting for his fees over your carcass!*"

## CHAPTER X.

"SAY your prayers, and change your seat, Scragg; the *water-chair is ready!*"

At this moment the tinkle of a bell was heard, and the next instant a folded note dropped mysteriously down direct beside where Sharkie was standing.

Taking up the note the latter individual read it, when he exclaimed:

"No time to lose, lads! there's a job on hand! Come, let's finish Scragg, and git."

Swipy now spoke up, and said:

"Look here, pals, ye've run this rascal down; leave him to me, will you? I want to get him to sign some papers, and then I'll let the tide in on him!"

After a few moments' private conversation between Sharkie and the Toad the former and his companions ascended the ladder, leaving the latter and Scragg alone together in the underground refuge.

"Vot a funny feller you vos, Swipy," exclaimed Scragg, when he and the former were alone, after the latter had been prevented from ascending with the rest of the burglars.

"Yes, I am a very funny fellow, Scragg! the funniest fellow you ever met, I guess."

"Oh! by Jiminitti, Swipy, how smart you vos! and don't you know, Swipy, dot I vos always your friendt! didn't I keep Lawyer Gray from doing you any harm? yes, ya-a-s! I vos always your best friendt."

"Then, if you are my best friend, you will give me all the information I want, for I know well enough that Gray is no friend of mine."

"No, Gray he vos a tam scoundrel! I always said that, and I hope dot you git de best ob him, my poy!"

"I mean to. I've got the best of you now, anyhow, Scragg; and now, old man, tell me what became of Mr. Lander?"

"Oh! let me see! Mister Lander; vel, he diedt! ya-a-s, he diedt in Australia."

"That's false! Gray murdered him, and you assisted in the crime."

"Der you go joking again, Swipy. My gootness gra-a-cious! vot a joker you pe, my poy!"

While talking he had edged away from Swipy, and now as he made the last remark, he continued, "I haf a baber in mine pocket vot contains de whole story! Shust so soon I find dot baber den I could tell you all about it."

While Scragg continued this talking he was fumbling down in one of his pockets.

He suddenly drew forth his hand, and the next instant there came a flash and a report, followed by a low chuckle, as he exclaimed:

"Dot vos de baber, Swipy, my poy!"

Scragg, when fumbling in his pocket, had secured a pistol, and as he spoke he blazed away at Swipy.

Fortunately the latter had been prepared for Scragg's treachery, and while the latter was yet laughing Swipy let fly two shots in quick succession, at the same moment exclaiming:

"Here are a couple of billet-doux that I have found, Scragg!"

"Hold up! stop! murder!" cried Scragg. "Mine gootness gra-a-cious! Swipy! it vos all a joke!"

"Lay your pistol on the table, Scragg, and we will call it a truce!"

In a moment Scragg's pistol was laid upon the table, and Swipy took possession of it.

"By Jiminitti! Swipy! vot for you make sich a kind of fun?"

"Well, old man, I think you commenced it! but we'll lay all jokes aside, now, and come down to business. Here, Scragg, come, sit down in this chair."

"Oh, Swipy, my dear poy, dot vos de water-chair, und de tide is coming in."

"That's just the reason I want you to sit on this chair, Scragg; and you'll find it a harmless seat, if for once in your life you act like an honest man."

Scragg did not offer to obey, when Swipy advanced toward him with a cocked pistol leveled at his head.

"Refuse to take a seat in that chair, and it's certain death. Obey me, and you shall have a chance for your life."

Scragg rose to his feet, and with trembling limbs and moans of agony, caused by the very excess of his terror, shuffled around and took a seat in the fatal chair.

Swipy bound him securely, then seating himself opposite to his victim, said:

"Now, Scragg, my foot is on the fatal spring, and *the tide is coming in.* Answer me one lie and down goes my foot, and down you go to the eels."

"My gootness gra-a-cious!" moaned Scragg, and his terror-distended eyes looked as though they would actually roll from their sockets.

For a moment a grave-like silence prevailed in that dark murder-hole, down under the ground. At length Swipy spoke.

"Now, then, tell me," he said, "what became of Mr. Lander?"

"As I lif, Swipy, I can not dell you."

"Did he really sign that deed of trust? or was that the forged signature that Lawyer Gray compelled me to attach to the paper?"

"Dot vos de baber you signed. Mr. Lander never made no such baber."

"Now, tell me all that you know about this affair."

"All dot I know ish vot I found owat in the last few days. Gray, he use me for his games, but he no make me a partner mit his secrets; but he vos proke mit money, and den I makes him dell me all how matters stand. Dot vos how I know dot the trust vos a forgery."

"What is the game he wants to work by capturing Bertie Lander?"

"You make me dell, den Grey he kill me sure. May be it vos petter dot I die now, undt not shpeak."

"You may do as you please, but I will tell you one thing, if you make a clean breast of it to me I will promise that he shall never know, under any circumstances whatever, how I became possessed of my information."

"Dot vos all right, but den you go and dell de Gypsy Detective, und he make no bromise, und he dell shust ver he got all information."

"No; the Gypsy Detective will not do anything of the kind. What is more, I will promise not to tell even the Gypsy Detective."

As Swipy spoke he cast a meaning glance at old Scragg, and the latter caught the full glance of his eyes when, suddenly, a certain startling revelation appeared to burst upon his mind, and he exclaimed:

"My gootness gra-a-cious! how I know thot so sooner? By Jiminitti! dot vos so all de time. I learn somedings, ugh! dot vas awful; but I find out more."

"Well, what have you found out more, old man?"

"Dot de Gypsy Detective vos sure to be on hand shust in time."

"Well, where is he?"

"Mine gootness gra-a-cious! don't tought dot I vos a fool. Swipy und de Gypsy Detective, eh? *de vos de same person?*"

"You think so?"

"I know him now! My gootness! vot a vunder you vos! I tought all de time der vos somedings unt I see before in your eyes! But now, come, Swipy, how it vos dat you look sometimes like a Gypsy und den like Swipy, eh?"

"That is my secret, Scragg; and now, see here, I have got some papers that I want you to sign."

"Oh, mine gootness gra-a-cious! I don't know how to write, Swipy."

"Well, I will learn you, then; but it strikes me that I have seen you write several papers for Gray to sign, in years gone by, and I do not believe that your hand has forgotten its cunning yet."

After some further conversation old Scragg at length signed a number of papers which the Gypsy Detective had already for the purpose.

The old man was then compelled to take a terrible oath that he would not reveal the detective's identity to Gray.

After the oath had been taken the Gypsy Detective said:

"Now, old man, you know me—you know that I am always 'just in time'! If you reveal one word of what has passed in this hell hole I will be upon your track, and you will seal your own doom! Remember that I have got the papers!"

"I vill be as silent as the grave. I vos more afraid mit you den I vos mit de tuyvil himself!"

A few moments later Swipy and old Scragg were up in the bar-room.

There was no one in this all-night place but the Irishman mentioned as having entered just before the gang had descended into the fatal water-chair room.

Scragg would have passed right out, but Swipy caught him, and whispered in his ear.

The old man sat down in the upper rear room, while Swipy went out into the bar-room and exchanged a signal with the Irishman, which was not observed by the dozing bar-tender.

The Irishman followed Swipy into the back room, when the latter produced all of the papers which Scragg had signed, and one after the other made the old man acknowledge them, as the Irishman signed his name as a witness.

When this business was completed Swipy told Scragg that he could go.

At once the old man passed out into the bar-room, as he moved along he shuffled with his feet. The noise awoke the bar-tender, when Scragg tipped him a signal.

A pair of keen eyes were watching the old man and saw this movement, and as the old rogue passed out of the door the bar-keeper stepped around and attempted to close and lock it behind him, but a heavy hand was laid upon the whisky-slinger's neck, and a voice said:

"Hold on, my pretty young fellow! yer will let us out if yer plase."

The bar-tender turned suddenly, but the next instant he himself lay sprawling upon the floor, while Swipy and the Irishman passed out.

"Scragg has broken his oath already!" said the Gypsy Detective. "He signaled that bar-tender, and had you not acted as you did, there would have been a score of scoundrels to murder us in less than five minutes!"

"Begorra! let's overtake the old villain, and toss him into the river!"

"No; the man's life is precious to me. I will want to use him some of these days, as a witness, to hang the arch villain, his master."

In the meantime old Scragg had stolen away through the darkness, muttering to himself:

"By Jiminitti! now dot vos sure! Mine life vos no goot so long dat Gypsy Detective vos alive! Der must be no mistake next time; but dot Swipy must 'kroke' now! He vos dan generous; more as to me den to anybody's! Swipy, he! he! now I spend money dot will puy you a coffin, he! he! ha! ha! y-a-a-s! dot veller vos gone now sure!"

## CHAPTER XI.

COLIN URQUHARDT was sitting in his office, in about the same attitude as we found him upon a former occasion, when there came a knock at his office door; and in answer to his summons to enter an old man, evidently past seventy, hobbled into the room.

Colin was a gentleman, and instantly he arose to his feet, and offered his venerable visitor a chair.

"Your name is Urquhardt?" said the old man, in a squeaky voice.

"That is my name, sir. What can I do for you?"

"Well, I must see first how much you know about law. I can not trust my business to every man."

Before the young lawyer could reply to this eccentric statement the office door opened, and a magnificently dressed lady swept into the apartment.

Throwing herself into a chair this woman glanced an instant at the old man, and said, abruptly:

"Possibly I am interrupting a business interview; if so, I am in no hurry, and can wait."

"Oh, madam," exclaimed the old man, "you may be a regular client of this gentleman's, and as I have not yet entered upon my business with him, I will retire and leave the field to you."

"Thank you, sir. I am sorry that my business is of a private nature, such as precludes witnesses."

The old man left the office, when the lady said, in a low, cautious voice:

"I have a singular request to make."

"I am all attention."

"You were to call at my house to-morrow morning?"

"I was."

"Well, can you make it convenient to come this evening instead?"

"I will do so."

"Furthermore, I have reason to believe that certain enemies are watching my house, and have every person who enters under surveillance."

"I understand."

"Will you please to come in some disguise which will hide your identity?"

"I will."

"When I make my business known more fully I will explain also more clearly the absolute necessity for this request. I will await you between eight and nine o'clock. Good-day, sir," and the lady left the office as abruptly as she had entered it.

This last visitor had not been gone more than five minutes when the old man came hobbling again into the office. His first words were:

"So that handsome lady wishes you to come to her house at night, and in disguise, eh? And you, you rogue, agreed to the appointment?"

"You have been eavesdropping, old man!" said Colin, indignantly.

"Oh, yes, I wanted to hear what that lady had to say. I was suspicious of her."

"If you were a younger man I should eject you, you old lunatic!"

"You are an impudent young rascal! and I wish to tell you that I will waive the disparity between our ages, and dare you to put me out of this office!"

The young lawyer was puzzled what to do. At length, thinking that he might intimidate the old fellow, he arose, saying:

"I can stand this no longer. Unless you leave this office I shall be compelled to eject you in spite of your many years."

"Go ahead," cried the old man.

Colin advanced toward him, when suddenly the stranger thrust his hand in his pocket, and withdrawing it with a cocked pistol in his hand he said, as he leveled the pistol at the lawyer's head:

"Sit down, I wish to talk to you."

Instead of sitting down the lawyer suddenly sprung forward and grappled with the stranger, at the same moment seizing his wrist, and giving it a twist which compelled him to drop the pistol, which fell upon the floor and exploded.

It was a small pistol, and the report was not louder than the crack of a Chinese cracker.

Holding the stranger in a firm grasp, so that he was powerless to struggle, the lawyer said:

"I will hand you over to the police. They may probably succeed in making you speak out and disclose yourself."

"No, you won't hand me over to the police."

"Why?"

"Because I am 'just in time'!"

The last words were spoken in a familiar voice, which caused the lawyer to release his hold and exclaim:

"By all the heathen gods, Philip Tremain, what means this masquerading?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Gypsy Detective, as he removed the gray wig, and disclosed the hair of his head shaven close to the scalp, as he continued:

"It means that I must go around in different rigs until we have run our game to earth. I have got excellent playing cards, but not a full hand yet, old boy!" and the Gypsy Detective laughed again.

"But why have you adopted this disguise?" asked Colin Urquhardt.

"I will tell you. I have been upon professional duty, and in order to destroy my identity as the Gypsy Detective it was necessary for me to go it bald-headed, and I did. I have been right into the very nest of the worst gang of thieves in the State."

"Then you have covered yourself with glory by another of those startling arrests that have already made your name famous as an officer?"

"I have done nothing of the kind, and I will tell you truly, during my visit to this slum hole of infamy, I discovered certain facts which have a bearing upon the affair of the Landers, that you and I have in hand."

"And you allowed these thieves and murderers to escape, to serve a private purpose?"

"I did not; I only surrendered the glory of their arrest to other officers, by lodging the information which will rid the city, for a season, of one of the worst gangs that ever infested it."

"Good for you!"

"Thank you; and now tell me, have you visited your clients?"

"I have."

"And how did you find them?"

"Cheerful and hopeful."

"Did you obtain any additional information which will assist in running the fiend Gray to earth?"

"I am sorry to say that I have not. We must get the better of that man before we enter the courts, as he has got his scheme so skillfully mapped out that we will find it hard to throw him."

"Where does his greatest strength lay?"

"In the cunning scheme of having a woman and her daughter to represent my clients."

For a moment the Gypsy Detective was thoughtful, but at length he said:

"Then our first play is to run this woman and her daughter down, prove who they are, and establish a villainous relationship between them and Lawyer Gray."

"Exactly."

"What do you think of the woman who is to personate the real Mrs. Lander?"

"I have not seen her yet."

"You are a good lawyer, but a poor detective. She was in this office only a few moments ago."

"What! my rich lady client?"

"Yes."

"She gave me a different name."

"For a purpose, my dear fellow."

"Then it is not best for me to run my head into the lion's jaws by visiting her house?"

"That is just what you must do. They think they are playing a smart game, but we can beat them with their own deal of the cards; but it will require nerve, pluck, and cunning."

"I can claim nerve and pluck, and you certainly are the most cunning individual I ever met."

"You are to call upon this lady to-night?"

"Yes."

"Can you make up for a woman?"

"What do you mean?"

"Can you disguise yourself so as to look and act like a fashionable lady?"

"I hardly think I can."

"Well, I will post you how this thing can be done."

For a full hour the detective and the lawyer remained together engaged in a low, earnest conversation. At the expiration of that time the detective took his leave.

Early in the evening of the same day that the Gypsy Detective had entered the young lawyer's office in the disguise of an old man, a lady, gorgeously arrayed, sat in the parlor of a stylish up-town mansion, beneath the glare of a brilliant chandelier.

We are about to describe a scene that our readers will shudder at, and say that it is not possible that such beautiful fiends can exist.

In anwer, we will say, that right in the City of New York there are women as beautiful as Eastern houris, whose hearts are as dead to pity and any other sentiment but *self* as a stone is to blood.

For full half an hour this wondrously handsome woman remained alone, seemingly lost in a dreamy reverie, when her meditations were disturbed by a light rap upon the parlor door.

"Come in," she said.

The door opened, and admitted two handsomely dressed young ladies.

One of them advanced, leading the other by the hand, and said:

"This is my cousin, madam, of whom I spoke to you."

The madame flashed her handsome eyes upon the young lady thus introduced, and surveyed her appearance from head to foot.

After a moment her eyelids half closed over her beautiful orbs, and a thoughtful expression came to her countenance, as she said:

"Your cousin's face strikes me as one that I have seen before. What is her name?"

"Rose Broun."

"It is a common name, and does not strike me as a familiar one, and yet there is an expression about her eyes that sends a cold chill over me as though their glance recalled some unpleasant yet indistinct reminiscence. Pray, Miss Rose, tell me, have we ever met before?"

"Possibly," was the equivocal answer, in a low, subdued tone of voice.

"That is an equivocal answer, young lady; please make your reply more direct and positive."

The young lady who had thus been introduced to the apparent mistress of the house really possessed a remarkable face.

Her eyes were dark, and had a strikingly piercing glance; her features were rather plain, yet there was something in the general contour of her face and expression which made her look beautiful.

In reply to the last pointed command Rose said:

"I have often met you, madam, upon the street; and I was always attracted toward you by your beauty and elegance of dress. Several

times I have been conscious that you have caught me staring at you in a seeming imprudent manner, but I do not think that you and I ever exchanged a word before this evening."

"Ah, yes! that may account for my impression. Well, I hope you will find your residence with me pleasant, agreeable, and successful."

After a second scrutinizing glance the speaker added:

"I expect particular company to-night, and will excuse you and Etta for the present. To-morrow I will become better acquainted with you."

The two younger ladies retired, and again the woman first introduced to our readers was alone.

"There is danger in that girl Rose!" remarked the woman first introduced, when again alone.

"Yes, danger," she added, speaking to herself. "She lied to me when she explained where we had met. Well, well, to-morrow I will send her adrift. I can not have any one around me whose presence sends a cold chill over me, bah! I wish this business of to-night was over with. Were I doing this job for pay it would not be so bad, but I am in Gray's power. He says 'do this,' and I do it. I must be free from this man. I will fix the matter to-night, and then, *then* I will find an opportunity to fix him, and and once more be free."

In the intensity of her bitter thoughts the woman was not aware how loudly she was giving expression to them, nor did she observe the presence of a man who came stealthily from the rear parlor, and had reached a position across the velvety carpet, directly behind the chair upon which she was sitting.

An instant later he spoke, and then she knew that she had been overheard, and her handsome face assumed the ashen hue of death.

## CHAPTER XII.

"I CERTAINLY can thank you for your contemplation to your own soul, that after you shall have fixed one man you will then find a way to *fix me!*"

A full minute elapsed before the woman sufficiently subdued the agitation caused by her sudden surprise to answer.

When she did speak, there was a terrible glance in her eye, woman as she was, and the words were fairly hissed from between her beautiful lips.

"As usual," she said, addressing the man who had thus stolen in upon her, "you have crept upon me as the tiger creeps toward its prey."

"The words that I just overheard warns me that it is policy for me to come upon you unaware sometimes; as in the present instance, if I had not come as I did, I would not have learned of your amiable intentions toward myself."

"Listen, Lawyer Gray, you *may drive me too far!* There are times when no fate is too terrible to prefer to a thraldom like mine, and I am one of those who may learn to defy even you!"

"And what will be the result? I will guard myself so that you do not murder me, Alice Dutcher!"

"Bah! Should I once be driven to seek revenge, your death would be the mildest form of punishment I would mete out to you."

"I do not scare, Alice Dutcher! You are in my power, beautiful as you are—you are my slave!"

"No, not your slave as long as I have certain documents ready to transfer to *a man who is more cunning than you*, and more to be dreaded!"

So earnest and excited were both the speakers that neither observed the portion of a human shadow thrown upon the parlor wall, and which came, as but a slight investigation would have proven, through the partly opened door of the rear parlor.

Bartley Gray had been standing behind this woman's chair, but when she uttered the last words he came around and stood in front of her.

His face was pale, and his eyes glittered with the light of a terrible passion; his limbs even trembled under him, as he said:

"So you have reached a pass where you dare to threaten me?"

"Yes, I dare threaten you! I begin to feel that your successful hours are fast running to a close, that there is an avenging fate upon your track, in the shape of a man, who will make, shortly, such a monument of punishment for your crimes, that you will be an object too pitiable even to hate!"

"And who is this terrible Nemesis?"

"The Gypsy Detective."

Lawyer Gray recoiled half way across the parlor, and clasped his hands to his bosom to still the sudden agitation of his wicked heart, as he fairly gasped:

"Have you been treating with him?"

*The shadow widened upon the wall,* and for a brief instant a full face was thrust through the opening between the doors, and a pair of flashing eyes glanced upon the tableaux represented by Lawyer Gray and the woman, Alice Dutcher.

"I have not; but I have learned something of the web he is weaving around you, I know something of the pit he is digging for you to fall in, and I know that you are walking directly toward it!"

"Then the bond which bound you and I and our interests is severed, eh, Alice?" said Gray, in a more gentle tone of voice and manner.

"No; it will be more firmly cemented if you make up your mind that I am no longer your slave, but that we stand upon equal ground."

"And what do you propose?"

"That in future we act as partners, not I as your instrument *without pay!*"

"Make your meaning plainer."

"You are playing for a big stake!"

"Suppose I admit such to be the fact?"

"I wish to share in the winnings. Bind yourself to make me your partner, and certain knowledge that I have obtained shall be used in your interest, and you will find me a faithful and daring ally! Refuse to share with me, and the information I possess shall be used against you."

"How can I trust you after the words I heard you use to-night?"

"You can trust me because I can not work without you, nor you without me; to win we must work together."

"And how shall we win?"

"One of those who are working against us will be in here to-night; the others will come at some future time, and then the road is clear."

"Well, I accept your terms. At what time is our first man to be here?"

"Within an hour."

"And how will you dispose of him?"

"You must leave that to me."

"But this Gypsy Detective?"

"We will dispose of him last. Let us get rid of the others, and I will crush that tawney-faced devil so surely and suddenly, that he will never know from whence the blow came!"

At that moment there came a ring at the outer door bell.

"Who can that be?" exclaimed Gray.

"Our first man, I hope."

"Then it is better that I should get out of the house."

Bartley Gray moved toward the rear parlor, while the shadow which had rested on the wall, suddenly vanished.

Again the woman was alone, but only for a moment, ere a servant ushered into the parlor an elderly man, to whom Alice Dutcher said:

"Are you the person whom I expected?"

"I am!" was the answer of the stranger, as he seated himself with an at-home-like manner upon a chair.

## CHAPTER XIII.

OUR readers are entitled to know how Philip Tremaine, the Gypsy Detective, became interested in the fate of Mrs. Lander and her daughter.

Some weeks previous to the opening of our story, a dark-faced young stranger called at the humble apartments, and after a few preliminary words, said, abruptly:

"Madam, if there exists a fiend in human form on earth, *Bartley Gray is the man!*"

The strong language with which he introduced himself, was addressed to a lady verging toward middle age.

The latter was plainly dressed, and yet, despite the plainness of her attire, the symmetrical contour of her form, the refined dignity of her manners, and the matured beauty of her face, pronounced her at a glance—a lady.

Besides the two persons above described, there was a third party in the room—a young girl not more than sixteen years of age.

A moment's silence followed the strong words of the stranger, when, at length, Mrs. Lander said, addressing him:

"I know that Bartley Gray is a penurious man; and I could believe that he possessed a morose temperament, although he has proved himself a noble friend to me and my daughter."

"Madam, you believe Bartley Gray to be your friend. I *know* that he is your bitterest enemy; and I wonder that the heartless scoundrel has not, ere this, wiped you from his path."

There was that in the manner and tone of the young man which forced the conviction upon her that, although he might have been laboring under some grave mistake, he was at least earnest and sincere. Resuming her seat, she said:

"Bartley Gray may have done you an injury. Smarting under the sting of your own wrongs, it may be that you believe he is capable of wronging all with whom he comes in contact."

"Bartley Gray has wronged me! Still, although my injury is great, the wrong that he has done you far excels, in cruel wickedness, mine."

"Will you please make your meaning plain?"

"I will try to; but first answer me this question, Where is your husband—your child's father?"

This last question caused both mother and daughter to betray the wildest excitement. A shadow of a fearful sorrow shrouded both their faces, and in trembling tones and with clasped hands the two females inquired simultaneously:

"What do you mean?"

"Madam, my question is a direct one—answer it!"

"He has been lost to us for five years."

"Did you ever ask Bartley Gray where he was?"

"Bartley Gray? Why, he never knew my husband."

"You are mistaken, madam—your husband was Bartley Gray's best friend. They were schoolmates, and their acquaintance was subsequently renewed when both were men."

"If your statement is true, sir, it explains a mystery and accounts for Bartley Gray's friendship; and yet it is strange that he never acquainted me with the fact of this friendship."

"Has he never spoken of your husband?"

"He never has."

"Yes, and there are weighty reasons why he should not."

"You surprise me. What are they?"

"Robbers and murderers do not generally mention the names of their victims in the presence of those who are made sufferers by their crimes."

Raising her hand, and trembling from head to foot with emotion, Mrs. Lander exclaimed:

"Now I demand that you speak plainly!"

"I will do so," was the firm reply.

"In order to make my story plain, I must tell you of an act of cruelty performed by Bartley Gray previous to the time that he committed the great wrong against your family.

"A widowed mother placed her only son under the charge of Bartley Gray as an office boy.

"This boy was a skillful penman, and in that capacity was useful to his employer.

"One day Bartley Gray complimented the boy's skill in the presence of a third party, and subsequently persuaded the boy to exhibit his skill by imitating a certain signature.

"The boy was an adept, and the counterfeit was so like the real that none but an expert could have detected the difference.

"The youth was proud of his skill, and being unacquainted with law or crime, was not aware of what a dangerous faculty he possessed.

"A few days later this innocent boy entered his employer's office, when the latter called him to a desk on which were spread some documents, and in an indifferent manner told him to sign them.

"The name he was ordered to write was *the same signature he had imitated a few days before.*

"The lad did it willingly, in the very innocence of his heart not knowing the nature of the act, the purpose of the signature, or the consequences that were likely to ensue.

"When all the papers had been signed, Bartley Gray gathered them together, put them in his safe, locked the latter, and then, turning toward the boy, with a look upon his face in which was depicted malignity so terrible, heartlessness so apparent, and triumph so hellish, that the lad will never forget it until the last day of his life, said:

"'Boy! from this moment *you are my slave!* my abject slave! Mine, soul and body, forever!'

"'What do you mean?' cried the boy, not yet fully understanding the nature of the crime which he had involuntarily committed.

"'My meaning is plain,' replied the lawyer, with a countenance gleaming with wickedness. 'You are a forger! Those were genuine documents which you signed. The attachment of that signature to those papers involves thousands of dollars. The signing of them was forgery.'

"It would be impossible to depict the terror, or make plain the agony of that boy, as with a countenance livid like one stricken with death, he stood before that cruel monster who had forced him to crime, and held him soul and body in his toils, with the lash of a fearful penalty hanging over him.

"A happy thought struck the boy, and he said:

"'I am not your slave, and will not do your bidding. This hour I will leave your service.'

"'Pass that door without my permission, and you go to prison.'

"'On what charge?'

"'Forgery.'

"'Even if I did commit forgery, the fact stands that I had nothing to gain by it, and no one witnessed the act but you.'

"'Dat vos a mistake, sonny. Wid my leetle eyes I saw you do dot naughty thing. I vos sorry dot a poy so young was such a villain. I tell you, my leetle friend, dot you better look out and keep friends mit de boss, oderv e he shust have you hanged.'

"The last speaker stepped from behind a green screen which hung before a recess where a bookcase once had stood.

"This individual was an old man whom the boy had frequently seen in conference with his employer.

"He was villainous old chap, who had well earned his soubriquet of the 'Fox.'

"This old scoundrel, whose name was Aaron Scragg, had evidently been placed behind that screen, in order to witness the boy's involuntary crime, so that there would remain no possible loop hole for escape from the terrible consequences suggested.

"A year passed; it is useless to recount the horrors of those twelve months.

"One fact only prevented that boy from flying and hiding himself, if need be, at the bottom of the dark waters of the river, if he could find no other place of refuge.

"He and his mother were without relatives or friends in the world, and the latter was stricken upon a bed of sickness, which made her a helpless invalid.

"Like a sleuth hound his persecutor or his satelites were ever upon that boy's track, and for a season he remained there, bound hand and foot, soul and body.

"This, madam, is but one episode in the career of villainy of that unscrupulous demon, Bartley Gray."

Mrs. Lander and her daughter had listened to this terrible tale with faces of amazement and eyes distended with horror.

For a moment silence succeeded his relation. At length Mrs. Lander said:

"Is that boy still living?"

"He is, but he is no longer a boy," was the reply.

"Why, then, does he not denounce the man who did him this cruel wrong?"

"Because the man was more cunning than the boy.

"The forgery upon those papers was discovered when it was sought to negotiate them, and a case was made out against that boy, two years later, which made his guilt apparently so palpable that nothing but a confession from the lips of the two villains who entrapped him can ever establish his innocence."

"Where is that boy now?"

"There is a reward offered for his capture, and he is in hiding like the most guilty wretch that ever earned the penalty of the gallows."

## CHAPTER XIV.

AGAIN there was a pause, and again the silence was broken by Mrs. Lander, who said:

"You have asserted that Bartley Gray committed a great wrong against my family—a greater wrong than was committed against you, for I can guess who you are without asking the question. Pray, then, continue your story, and relate the second episode in Bartley Gray's career of villainy."

"I told you that the lawyer's victim was a widow's son, and that she was an invalid; the mother died, and the boy was left to fight the fearful fight alone.

"His mother had been laid in her narrow grave, and his preparations were about complete for making an escape, when an incident occurred which caused him to still linger and inhale the foul atmosphere of that den, where so many infamous crimes were concocted.

"One day a stranger entered that office.

"He was a noble-looking man—yes, truth, honor, and courage shone on every lineament of his face. Madam, it is unnecessary for me to describe his personal appearance further.

"The man who entered that office was the living counterpart of those pictured features."

"My husband! my father!" were the several exclamations that burst from the lips of mother and daughter, upon hearing this startling declaration.

"Yes, madam, it was your husband; ay, girl, it was your father," resumed the young stranger, speaking vehemently.

"What of him? Tell us quickly," cried both the females.

"George Lander came to Bartley Gray as an honorable man would go to an honorable friend, and told him his little romance, and thereby invited his own doom.

"George Lander had returned from Australia; he had been successful in his speculations; he had concealed his success from his family, intending to join the two surprises which he had in store for them.

"He hoped to announce his own arrival home, and his wonderful success at the same time.

"He had brought with him drafts for two hundred thousand dollars.

"The boy, Bartley Gray's victim, heard the returned miner tell this fact, saw him produce the drafts, and saw, also, the sinister smile of triumph which glittered in Bartley Gray's eyes as they fell upon the certificates of this great treasure.

"Then the boy knew that the lawyer's friend was to be robbed, but he little thought that murder was to precede the robbery.

"At once he set about the forming of some plan to warn the returned miner of his danger, and the treacherous character of his supposed friend.

"In the meantime the object of George Lander's visit to Bartley Gray was announced.

"The returned Australian was not well posted in banking business, and he had sought out the lawyer to assist him in obtaining the money for his drafts.

"For some purpose of his own, the lawyer left his office for a short time, leaving the wealthy miner alone with the boy and the man, Aaron Scragg.

"Scragg sat in a chair, seemingly asleep. The boy thought this a good opportunity.

"He had written a few words of warning upon a slip of paper. Rising, he sought to cross the room on tip-toe, and slyly convey the slip of paper to the intended victim, when a peculiar 'click' sounded upon his ear, which proceeded from where Scragg sat.

"The boy turned; Aaron Scragg was wide-awake, and there was a dangerous twinkle in his ferret-like eyes, as he allowed the muzzle of a pistol to protrude from the sleeve of his coat, while he nodded significantly for the boy to resume his seat.

"This pantomime was unobserved by Lawyer Gray's client.

"The boy resumed his seat, and rapidly thought the matter over.

"His first impulse was to defy everything, and warn the stranger of his danger at all hazards."

"Would to Heaven that he had!" exclaimed Mrs. Lander, involuntarily.

"Would to Heaven that he had!" re-echoed the narrator; "but, madam, unfortunately he did not. He did not dream that the infamous crime would be perpetrated so quickly; it was after banking hours, and he knew that no checks could be cashed upon that day.

"Another plan came to the boy's mind. He resolved to follow the stranger and warn him, after he had left the office. The slip of paper was destroyed, and the boy resumed his work.

"Bartley Gray returned. Shortly after, the lawyer and his client left the office together, but Aaron Scragg remained.

"Fearing that the opportunity might be lost for warning the unsuspicious miner, the boy rose to follow them.

"He reached the door—his hand was upon the knob, when suddenly he felt a stinging blow upon the top of his head, and everything was a blank.

"Aaron Scragg had felled him to the ground with the butt of a pistol, and the boy fell over on the floor.

"An hour later, upon returning to consciousness, the boy found himself lying upon the floor of the office; he was alone, and in total darkness.

"Rising to his feet, he groped his way to the door, and discovered, with a thrill of dismay, that he was locked in.

"Wounded as he was, he did not dare to call for assistance, and was compelled to remain there and wait until he was released.

"Slowly the hours passed; and there alone, suffering and wounded, that boy waited.

"About midnight the door of the office was opened; Bartley Gray entered, followed by Scragg.

"The two villains brought candles with them. When these latter were lighted, by their flickering light the wounded youth witnessed a sight which chilled his blood with horror, and caused his heart to almost cease its life-beats.

"The faces of both the men were pale—pale to ghastliness, and upon the lawyer's shirt-front were unmistakable imprints of bloody fingers.

"Scragg removed the long, greasy coat, which usually enveloped his person, and there upon his shirt-sleeves showed blood marks also.

"Each bore, also, unmistakable evidences of a recent struggle. The lawyer's eye was slightly discolored, while a purple streak traversed the back of the bony hand of Scragg.

"Despite these fearful indications, a triumphant smile rested upon the ghastly faces of the two scoundrels, and the boy knew then, that his master was not only a robber, but an assassin—a red-handed murderer—and it required no guessing to decide who had been their victim."

## CHAPTER XV.

PATIENTLY the man who had brought these terrible tidings waited, until the first violence of his listeners' grief had subsided, when he said:

"I am satisfied that you believe my story."

"I believe it more readily," after a moment replied Mrs. Lander, "from the fact that I have always believed that my poor husband had encountered some such dreadful fate; but the suspicion never crossed my mind that Bartley Gray was accessory to his taking off."

"When did you last have authentic news from your husband?"

"More than five years ago I received a letter stating that he would start for home at a certain date. I have never heard from him since. When the months passed and he came not, and we received no letters, I wrote to Australia making inquiries concerning him. It was a year before I received an answer to my letter. The letter contained the announcement that George Lander had sailed for the United States in a certain ship fifteen months previously. Adding this year and a quarter to the time which had intervened, until the reception of this letter by me, eighteen months had passed since my poor husband had been seen and recognized."

"Mrs. Lander," said the young stranger, "you will know me as Philip Tremaine. We will suppose that I am the person whose life Bartley Gray has blasted. You now know that he is the author of your misery and suffering—that he holds the wealth which is yours, and which he plundered from his victim. We should be friends. We should join our interests, unite in one purpose, and let that purpose be the final tracking down and unmasking of this scoundrel! We must compel him to restore to me my hopes and objects in life, to clear me before the world of guiltiness. We must force him to restore to you the fortune which is yours! We must bring him to justice—to punishment!"

"Bartley Gray, at present, is our pretended friend; he furnishes us the employment by which we earn our living. Knowing him to be my husband's murderer, how shall I act toward him?"

"Madam, I have a fearful duty to impose, and yet there is no other course for you to pursue. This man must not discover that you have learned that he is a villain and a murderer! You must treat him in the future, for a time, at least, as you have treated him in the past."

For a moment Mrs. Lander meditated; then she said:

"You can certainly furnish me some slight

proof that will justify me in believing your statement, and joining in the compact to unmask this man and punish him?"

"Madam, I can furnish you the most convincing proof of my truth and sincerity. It was the discovery of a certain fact which I am now about to reveal to you, which guided me to your door—which solved the mystery of your existence—which caused one of my purposes to terminate in success."

"Had you no previous knowledge of our existence?"

"I heard your husband speak of his wife and child, but he did not mention where you resided. All that I knew was, that the murdered man did have a wife and daughter, and through a marvelous incident I have found you at last."

"You have been faithful, wonderfully faithful to your purpose."

"Yes; and I would have been as long as life lasted—but I must furnish you the proof of my honesty; my indorsement shall come from the lips of our mutual enemy. Already that fiend has conceived a diabolical scheme—he meditates striking you a more terrible blow than was even the murder of your husband. Of the truth of this statement you shall have immediate proof."

Mrs. Lander's face was ghastly with terror, as she exclaimed:

"Tell me; what is his purpose?" and as she spoke, instinctively her glance rested upon the beautiful face of her child, as though by some weird, mental reasoning, a thousand little indices had culminated in one startling and complete revelation.

"When next you see Bartley Gray he will propose to you that your daughter be sent away to school at his expense."

"Great Heaven!" cried Mrs. Lander, "my heart told me that my child was to be the subject of your revelation!"

"Yes, madam! *like his shadow, in various guises, I am on that man's track!* During an interview between him and Scragg I learned the fact of your whereabouts, and overheard the particulars of an intended scheme, so rascally in its purpose that it was as though I were listening to the fiendish whisperings from below."

"What shall I do? murmured Mrs. Lander.

"Play this man's own weapons against him, and fear not. I have studied to become a mystery; and I am one. From this time forward I will stand between you and this man. *I will always be just in time* to foil him at every thrust."

At this instant, in wild bewilderment, Mrs. Lander chanced to glance out at the window, when, with a slight scream, she cried:

"There comes Bartley Gray now, and he will find you here."

"And I wish to remain here. Can you not conceal me somewhere?"

Mrs. Lander pointed to a closet. Philip Tremaine crossed the room, changed the key to the inner side, and closed the door upon himself as Bartley Grey's step was heard ascending the stairs.

The door of Mrs. Lander's apartment opened just after the closing of the closet-door upon the former's visitor, and admitted a man of marked and striking appearance.

This seeming gentleman entered with a cheery smile upon his face, while his manner was familiarly brusque, but kindly.

He seated himself, without waiting to be invited to do so, proving that he was on terms of intimacy with the occupants of the room.

Mrs. Lander's face was pale, and her manner excited and nervous, so markedly so that her visitor noticed her evident agitation, and he said:

"I fear, my dear Mrs. Lander, that you are not feeling well this morning."

"I am not, Mr. Gray," was the curt reply.

"And how is our little lady, Bertie?" said Lawyer Grey, addressing the daughter.

Bertie Lander's face was as pale as her mother's, and her manner not less excited and nervous.

The mother answered for the daughter by saying:

"Neither of us feel well to-day, Mr. Grey."

"Ah, I see that neither of you look well—it is probably the sultry state of the weather."

As Lawyer Gray volunteered this reply, his heavily fringed eyelashes closed over his eyes, and his head fell sideways over into his hand.

This was a peculiarity of this man when a sudden thought was suggested to him which required a moment's consideration.

For some seconds a silence followed Lawyer Gray's last observation, and the latter, during the interval, remained thoughtful but observant.

At length he said:

"Mrs. Lander, did it never strike you that your daughter needed rest and recreation. Is not this close city atmosphere too trying upon a constitution not overstrong at best?"

"I have often thought," answered Mrs. Lander, "that it was unfortunate that we could not afford a short summer vacation once in a while, but as we can not, I have not allowed myself to complain or long for that which was unattainable."

"I wish I was rich," said Bartley Gray, with a sigh.

"I thought that you were rich."

"No, madam, I am a comparatively poor man, and the little money that I do possess, I have worked hard for it. If I *was* rich you and Bertie should have a long country vacation."

"I am certainly grateful for your kind consideration of our comfort, but really, under no circumstances could I consent to accept such a service, even if you were wealthy."

"But, madam, you must not let your pride interefere with the health of your daughter."

"I do not know that my pride and the subject of my daughter's health conflict."

"I propose that Bertie shall have an excursion in the country, and I did hope that you would be delighted at the prospect in her behalf."

"Do you mean to say that you intended Bertie and I to be separated?"

"Only for a season, madam."

"Not for an hour. My daughter is all that I have in the world, and I could not spare her from me even for a day."

"Did it ever strike you that your daughter's school advantages had been very meager."

"I regret that such is the fact."

"And I propose to make up for lost time by sending her away to one of the best female seminaries in the country, where not only the mind but the body will receive proper and healthful training."

"I can not listen to any proposition, no matter how tempting, that would impose a condition tending toward a separation."

"Is it right and proper for you to allow purely personal considerations to stand in the way of the best interests of your daughter?"

"My judgment tells me that it is for the best interests of my child to keep her ever by me; furthermore, Bertie has not been wholly bereft of the advantages of instruction. I received a thorough education, and have been her instructress, and I am satisfied that my daughter's accomplishments far excel those of the majority of girls of her age, even among those who move in a circle far removed from our present sphere."

"Madam, it is evident to me that you are an ungrateful person, and I here warn you that if future suffering should be yours, you may thank your own obstinacy and ingratitude for inviting it."

"I hope that our difference in opinion concerning what is right will not make you my enemy?"

"It will compel me to leave you to your own resources."

"To that decision I can offer no protest."

Lawyer Gray rose from his seat, took his hat, and going toward the door, said:

"You shall have time to think over what I have suggested. I will see you again, and if you wish to save yourself future sorrow you will think favorably of what I have proposed."

As our readers will understand from the narrative as far as recorded, Lawyer Gray at once set about carrying his threats into execution, and for reasons now well known to our readers, had sought to destroy both mother and daughter.

## CHAPTER XVI.

We broke in upon our narrative just at that point where the gentleman was shown into the presence of that beautiful but wicked woman who had a moment previously first baffled Lawyer Gray, and then formed an infamous engagement with him wherein money was the object and murder the means.

"You have certainly been quite successful in assuming a disguise," said elegant Alice, as she drooped her eyelids and scanned the appearance of her visitor.

"I like to comply as nearly as possible with instructions," was the reply, "especially when acting in the service of as liberal a patron as yourself."

"You will find me even more liberal than you dare imagine, Mr. Urquhardt, if you succeed in bringing my business to a successful issue."

"I will do my best, madam, in this matter, to see the wronged righted and the guilty punished."

"Do you mean to say that you would not assist me in case my suit were an unjust one?"

"That depends upon circumstances."

"Well, fortunately for myself, as far as you are concerned, sir, my cause is just. I wish to free myself legally from a brute! I wish to break the shackles that have bound me in lifelong servitude of infamy—in short, I wish to obtain a divorce from my husband."

Instantly the thought flashed through Colin Urquhardt's mind that there was a great mistake somewhere. Sitting in the presence of this handsome and indignant woman, he felt that suspicion wronged her, and that for once the cunning Gypsy Detective was at fault.

"Will you assist me?" added his hostess, after a moment's silence, "or must our business terminate here?"

"I will assist you, madam, to the very best of my ability."

"Enough! We will have some wine and refreshments, and during our repast I will tell you my story."

Suddenly the words of the detective flashed across Urquhardt's mind.

"*Neither eat nor drink in that house, on your life!*"

He was about to protest against the ordering of a meal, but there came a second thought across his mind—his friend, the detective, was mistaken concerning the character of this beautiful woman. Already the sensitive nature of the young man was beginning to lose his strength of will and purpose under the spell of her fascinations.

An elegant repast was quickly placed upon the table, and with a smile which might have lured an ascetic to death, the magnificent woman invited the young lawyer to a seat at the table opposite herself.

Both partook. All thought of the warning he had received had been fairly fascinated from his mind.

While the meal was in progress, the lawyer, who was reveling in an ecstacy of delight, said:

"Now, madam, please let me hear your story. I must not forget the object of my visit here, in the mad delirium of pleasure with which your presence fills me."

"What a flatterer you are!"

"No, madam, I am not; my words may be presumptuously enthusiastic, but they are sincere."

For an instant the brilliant sorceress bowed her head in her hands, as though lost in thought.

Colin Urquhardt's eyes were fastened upon her, his cheeks were flushed, and the light of an awakening passion glowed in his eyes, when suddenly he felt a stinging sensation upon his cheek, and a small paper pellet fell in his lap.

Almost unconsciously he picked it up and unrolled it, when he started as though a venomous insect had burst forth from its center.

The color fled from his face, blanching it to ghostly whiteness, as he instinctively glanced around the room as though expecting to behold an apparition.

Upon the paper which had been thus mysteriously, but ingeniously, conveyed to him, were the simple, but startling words:

"*Remember! Beware!*"

At this instant the woman raised her face from her hands, and flashing a bewilderingly fascinating look upon her guest, said:

"*Come, we will have some wine*, and then proceed to business!"

"Some wine!" said the beautiful siren; and in his hands the lawyer held the mysterious warning.

The woman placed her delicate finger around the neck of the bottle of wine, and moving it across the table toward the lawyer, said:

"Open this! You never drank such wine before!"

"Madam, suppose we postpone the opening of this wine until after you have made your business known to me in detail! My faculties are clearer when my brain is not heated by liquor."

"Nonsense! I insist that you open the wine! I will drink, and if you are so ungallant as to

let me drink alone, I must, forsooth, excuse your lack of spirit."

The lawyer opened the bottle, and poured out some of its contents into a colored glass, when the lady seized the latter, raised it to her lips, and drank the wine; returning the glass to the table, she said:

"I will not insist upon your drinking, and yet I would *like to know why you* refuse to do so."

"Madam, you must remember that I did not come here to drink wine, nor have I refused to do so. All that I have insisted upon was business first and pleasure afterward, and I believe my course to be consistent with the character of both a man and a lawyer."

Colin had risen from his seat while speaking. When he had concluded, the woman said:

"Well, well, sit down. I suppose I must forgive you—and now I *will* proceed to business and tell my story."

The young lawyer reseated himself, when his lovely client said:

"Nineteen years ago I married a man many years my senior in age.

"My husband lived with me two years, and then went to Australia."

Colin Urquhardt gave a start, but said nothing, as his prospective client continued:

"A month after the departure of my husband I gave birth to a daughter."

"One moment, madam," exclaimed the lawyer, interrupting the narrator. "You have never told me your name. I can now mention the name that you claim."

"Indeed?"

"The man whom you married was—"

"George Lander."

"I thought so," muttered Colin.

"You surprise me. Why did you think so?"

"I will explain anon."

The woman was perfectly self-possessed, as she continued:

"I never saw my husband again, although he returned to New York about five years ago, and transferred a large property in trust for his daughter."

"In trust to Bartley Gray?"

"You appear to know my history as well as I know it myself."

"I begin to think that I do."

"Then it is useless for me to proceed."

"I have not said so. A previous knowledge of your affairs does not necessarily imply that I fully understand the situation."

"From whom did you ascertain anything concerning me and my private business?"

"From Bartley Gray."

"That is strange."

"Well, yes, there is something strange about this whole matter, madam. Are you aware that there is another lady who claims to be the widow of George Lander?"

"You astound me, sir."

"But I tell you the truth."

"The widow, you say, of George Lander?"

"Yes, madam."

"But who informed you that my husband was dead?"

"It is so understood."

"What mystery is this? Why, sir, I received a letter from my husband only one week ago."

"Then there must be an impostor somewhere."

"Undoubtedly. Any woman besides myself, who claims to be the wife or widow of George Lander, is most certainly an impostor."

"I believe you, madam."

"Thank you, sir; and how are we to deal with this creature?"

Colin Urquhardt was perfectly cool and self-possessed now, and there was a singular significance in his tones every time that he spoke.

In answer to the query of his hostess, he said:

"We had better warn her of the danger she is incurring by trying to personate another person"

"Will that be sufficient?"

"It ought to be, if she is smart enough to recognize her danger."

Alice Brown fastened her eyes upon the face of her guest in that peculiar manner previously described, as she said in a low, quiet voice:

"Do we fully understand each other, or are we flying at cross purposes?"

"I think that we understand each other perfectly."

"Whom do you believe to be the impostor?"

"*You, madam!*" replied Colin, boldly.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"AH!" replied the Syren, without the slightest change of countenance, "I begin to think that we do understand one another."

"Yes, madam, now we can speak unreservedly, both of us."

"You have stolen into my confidence, when you are really one of the conspirators against myself and child."

While speaking she had drawn a pistol from her pocket, the same one with which she had cowed down Lawyer Gray earlier in the evening.

This weapon was cocked, and her hand was upon the trigger as she held it beneath the table.

The cruel gleam of the spirit of a murderess shone in her eyes as she added, after a moment:

"Don't you think that your language is very insulting?"

"Pray, madam, do not compel me to speak words which you claim are insulting."

"I wish to have you to speak the truth."

Noiselessly the folding doors leading into the rear parlor were slid apart, while the figure of the young girl, Rose, appeared in the opening.

Slowly the woman was drawing her armed hand from under the table, when, like a noiseless shadow, the girl Rose glided across the room, and passing behind the woman's chair, seized her by the arm, at the same time saying:

"Do not commit a murder."

* * * * *

Intent upon her deadly purpose, Alice Brown was not aware of the girl's presence until she felt her grasp upon her arm, and heard her voice.

"Can you call it a murder when a lady would shoot down her insulter?"

"Give me the pistol," said Rose.

"I will not."

"Sir," said Rose, "be on your guard. This lady is armed, and means to do you an injury!"

Colin Urquhardt rose to his feet, and drawing a pistol from his pocket, deliberately cocked it, saying:

"Madam, if you have a pistol, hand it over to this young lady, who has my thanks for saving me from the doom of your intended treachery."

Alice Brown turned about and glanced with a tigerish expression at the young lady standing behind her chair.

"Give the pistol to me," said the latter.

Alice Brown did not comply with the command to surrender the weapon, but, on the contrary, made a quick movement, as though to use it, when the grasp upon her arm tightened so, that she was compelled to actually scream with the pain, while in a firm, commanding tone, Rose said:

"You *must* let me have that pistol!" and with wondrous dexterity, the speaker wrenched the weapon from the hand of the intended murderess, and passed it over to Colin Urquhardt.

"I demand to know who you are, miss," exclaimed Alice Brown, suddenly; adding, "you two may think that you have me in your power, but you are mistaken; you are both at my mercy."

Rose laughed a low, jeering laugh, when suddenly, the woman who had uttered the last threat, put a whistle to her lips, and blew a shrill blast.

"Ha!" exclaimed Colin, as he moved around to face the door, pistol in hand, ready for any emergency, "you intend that as a signal to summon some of your hired ruffians and assassins, I suppose;" and then addressing Rose, he added:

"I am going through that door out of this house. You have put your life in jeopardy on my account, and must fly with me. Come; before harm shall reach you, they must slay me."

Steps were heard in the hall-way, and in a few seconds the parlor door opened, and four ruffianly but well-dressed men entered the room.

"Ah, gentlemen," exclaimed the mistress of the house; "you have arrived just in time to protect me from the most wanton insult a woman was ever made to suffer!"

"Who has dared to insult you, madam?" asked one of the new comers, a tall, raw-boned, brawny specimen of the New York rough.

"That young scamp there," replied the woman, pointing toward Colin, and continuing: "He has sneaked into my house in disguise, after having previously smuggled an accomplice here, to rob me!"

"Look here, young feller," said the rowdy, advancing toward Colin Urquhardt, "I'm going to maul you!"

As the ruffian spoke, he advanced threateningly toward the young lawyer, closely followed by his three pals, when suddenly the girl Rose stepped between them, and motioning the rowdy back, exclaimed:

"Hold on, Frog! I know you, and know the game you want to get up here, but it won't work."

"Oh, ho! miss, so you know me, do you? Well, I'll be hanged if you ain't got the best of me, anyhow, for I don't recollect ever having seen your pretty face before. But tell me, sis, what game do you think we want to play?"

"You wish to force a fight upon this young man, and murder him; then you will call in the police, give yourselves up, and claim that you killed him in self-defense, and have plenty of perjured witnesses to swear to the truth of your statement."

"You are quite a fortune teller, ain't you?" sneered the ruffian, adding, as he raised his brawny arm threateningly: "If you don't moosey out of the road, I'll just muss up your pretty face for you, that's all!"

Ere another word passed, and before any one was aware of his intention, Colin Urquhardt suddenly drew Rose back, and stepping in front of the ruffian, meeting him face to face, exclaimed:

"Coward! I am ready for you; but don't, scoundrel as you are, raise your hand to a lady!"

"Oh, you'll do, my cull!" cried the ruffian, and he struck a powerful blow at Colin, and the next instant he himself lay stretched upon the floor.

The young lawyer had warded off the stroke intended for him, countering it with a well-directed crack.

The click! click! of several pistols was instantly heard, and a bloody fight was imminent, when suddenly the girl Rose sprung to the front, and throwing off a wig, stood facing the miscreants.

"The Gypsy Detective!" exclaimed the four villains, simultaneously, and they recoiled as though an avenging angel with drawn sword had suddenly dropped from the clouds and confronted them.

Not more astonished than the four villains, was Colin Urquhardt and the mistress of the house, at this sudden denouement to the exciting scene.

"Yes, I am the Gypsy Detective, as you scoundrels call me! and, as usual, I am 'just in time' to check-mate four of the worst villains that New York holds!"

"Who in thunder knew that you had an interest in this 'rig'?" said Frog, as he moved toward the door.

"I am supposed to be always around when villainy is on the tapis; you can go this time, my beauties, as I have some private business with Lady Alice."

The men were not physical cowards, but they were old villains, and well knew that the detective had come to the house where they found him on a "dead set," and consequently was prepared for every emergency, and that the chances were dead against them under the circumstances.

After they had gone, Philip Tremaine closed and bolted the front door behind them, and returning to the parlor, where the entrapped mistress was pacing the floor like a caged tiger, he said:

"Come, Lady Alice, sit down and we will talk matters over coolly, and probably you will be saved from getting into a bad snap; for I tell you, as sure as you are born, I am slowly but surely getting Bartley Gray dead to rights, and you are unable to aid him, as you must see that I have got you down fine also."

"I do not know what you are driving at, mister," was the reply.

"Oh, you are innocent—very!"

"I am an innocent and an injured woman."

"Dear! what a pity!"

"I do not wish to hold any conversation with you; you may be a police officer, but this is my house! You are here without warrant, and I order you to leave instantly!"

"If you mount on a high horse, I may conclude to arrest you, and when I leave this house take you with me!"

"You may do so if you dare."

"Oh! I dare; and besides, Bartley Gray would willingly give you away, since you have forced yourself into partnership with him."

"You were a witness to our interview?"

"I was."

"Well, the traitress who let you into the house will never regret it but once!"

"I will take care of her against you; but come, are you going to sit down and have a friendly talk with this lawyer and me?"

"No, I am not! I defy you, and I do not fear you! I am not a criminal, and will not be brow-beaten by you!"

"You forget that I overheard your conversation with Gray."

"Go and make the most you can out of it. I order you from my house!"

"All right, madam! we will go; but mind, I will be shadowing you day in and out; move carefully or I will drop to you, and then, away you go, that's all!"

A month passed. An interval during which the principal personages in our narative played a close game between one and another.

One fact was discovered by Colin Urquhardt—that Bartley Gray had so cunningly laid his plans, that it was useless to attempt to fight him in open court.

During the years that he had pretended to be the friend of Mrs. Lander and her daughter, he had procured documents from them, and wove such a cunning web around them, that he held all of the winning cards.

One of his most artful moves was the successful persuading of them to pass under an assumed name, and to do so openly.

The object of this singular scheme was now plainly apparent.

He had led them to destroy their own identity, and thereby play into his hands, so as to further the scheme which he had held in reserve—namely, to bring forward at the needed moment, a false Mrs. Lander.

Both the Gypsy Detective and the young lawyer almost daily received tangible intimation that stealthy and untiring assassins were upon their tracks.

Thus far both had successfully evaded every trap set to lure them to destruction.

While this game between our heroes and our villains was proceeding, Mrs. Lander and her daughter remained safely hidden in the retreat which the Gypsy Detective had provided for them in the vicinity of Bay Ridge.

One lovely afternoon, two ladies, evidently mother and daughter, were sitting upon the front piazza of a substantial summer residence on the shore road.

For some moments both had been silently enjoying the beauties of the autumn sunset, when at length the elderly lady said:

"Bertie, dear, it is now two weeks since we have heard from either Mr. Tremaine or Mr. Urquhardt."

"Yes, mother, and I begin to feel somewhat worried about both of them. I do not know why it is, but the shadow of an approaching evil has rested upon my spirits all day long."

"My dear child, the anxiety and excitement of the last few weeks is a sufficient explanation for your depression of spirits; and as to being worried about the two young friends who have so kindly become our champions, that is nonsense! They are both men who are capable of taking care of themselves."

At this moment Bertie, who had been standing with her back toward the road, chanced to turn about, and her eye fell upon the form of a man in the undress uniform of a policeman.

Her brief residence in the pure air of the country had brought a rich glow of health to her cheeks; her delicate form had become plump and rounded, although its exquisite symmetry had been preserved; and as she stood there in the soft glow of the sunset, she was radiantly beautiful.

Beautiful as a dream; but the instant her eye fell upon the individual mentioned, the color fled from her face, and she tottered back, and like a guilty child caught in some naughty act, concealed her person behind one of the pillars which supported the roof of the piazza.

"Why, my child!" exclaimed her mother, in alarm, "what is the matter?"

"Oh, mother, mother!" in low, piteous tones wailed the girl, her features expressive of an agonized terror, "don't you see what is the matter?" and she pointed down toward the gate leading out into the road.

The mother glanced in the direction indicated, and for the first time observed the man in the blue clothes leaning against the gate-post.

"Do you mean that man there, Bertie?"

"Yes, mother."

"Well, what is there so terrifying about his momentary presence there?"

"Oh, mother, he is a policeman!"

"Well, what of it, dearie?"

"And do you forget that I am *an escaped convict?*"

Instantly the mother's face became as pale and death-like as her daughter's, as she murmured:

"I had forgotten; but fear not, that man will attempt to arrest you at his peril! You are a wronged and innocent child, and you shall not be harmed, even if I defend you with my life!"

At this instant the man standing at the gate was joined by another, a rough-looking fellow, and both stood gazing insolently toward the piazza.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. LANDER was a brave woman, and as resolute as she was brave; and seeing these suspicious strangers standing there, she said, addressing her frightened daughter:

"Bertie, you go in the house, and I will go and question those men, and discover, if I can, what their business is."

Already the shadows of evening were lengthening across the dark waters of the bay, which lay spread out before the house, when Mrs. Lander descended the steps leading to the garden-path, and advanced boldly toward the gate, against which the two men were leaning.

As she approached them, the resolute woman said:

"What do you want here, man?"

"Nothing," was the surly reply.

"Then why do you stand and gaze insolently at the occupants of this house?"

"I guess we haven't hurt anybody, have we?"

"It is not pleasant to have strangers loitering around here, and you had better get off about your business."

"Don't be in a hurry. I want to ask you a question."

"You ask me a question! Why, what can a perfect stranger have to say to me?"

"Was that your darter that just stole into the house?"

"That is none of your business."

"May be not; but I reckon that I have seen that gal before."

"You are mistaken; you never saw my daughter before; nor would it make any difference even if you had. I tell you that you must go away, or you will be driven away."

"Well, I'll go when I get ready."

"We'll see," exclaimed Mrs. Lander, and she turned and walked rapidly toward the house, intending to call one of the men upon the place.

Upon reaching the piazza, she turned, when, to her great relief, she saw that both of the fellows had gone, and were moving up the road through the fast-gathering darkness.

In the hallway she was met by her daughter, who asked, anxiously:

"Ah, mother! who were they? I see that you are pale and very much excited. Are we in danger?"

"No, no, my child; those fellows were only a pair of wandering tramps; and yet," she added, involuntarily, "I wish Philip Tremaine or Colin Urquhardt were here."

That same evening, less than an hour after the conversation above recorded, Mrs. Lander started for New York.

The room occupied by Mrs. Lander and her daughter was a large front room, with a window opening out upon the roof of a wing to the main building.

The other occupants of the house were a widow, with her daughter and three sons, all of the latter being full-grown, strong, brave men, who lived at home and worked the farm on shares.

It so happened that one of the sons had some business in the city, and when Mrs. Lander inquired as to how she could reach there, the young man volunteered to drive her down.

It so happened, also, that upon this particular night the other two sons had arranged to go fishing, and the consequence was, that when the hour came for retiring, there were no males in the house at all.

Besides the widow and her daughter and Bertie, there was no other person in that roomy mansion, save one female servant—an old woman, whose dormitory was in the attic.

When Bertie consented to her mother's leaving her alone, she had not contemplated the absence of the two remaining sons, and the result was that she became exceedingly nervous and apprehensive.

The old servant retired to bed, and only the three women were sitting in the dining-room.

All was still, save the ticking of the clock upon the mantel piece, when suddenly a furious ring came upon the outer kitchen door.

Under ordinary circumstances, nothing would have been thought of this knocking at such a comparatively early hour in the evening.

The absence of all three of the men, which was an unusual occurrence, appeared to make even the widow and her daughter a little timid, and as the summons was repeated, the latter exclaimed:

"I wonder who on earth has come at such a late hour?"

A third time the rap came, and at length the widow said, with a strained laugh:

"What a trio of frightened fools we are!" and she moved toward the door; but in an instant Bertie rushed toward her, and laying a trembling hand upon the arm of the mistress of the house, gasped, while her eyes were dilated with terror:

"Don't let any one in, for Heaven's sake."

"Why, my dear young miss, how needlessly terrified you are! It may only be a neighbor."

"No, no; I know who it is! and don't let him in on your life?"

For the fourth time a rap came, louder than any before given, when Mrs. Smith exclaimed:

"But, my dear child, I must open the door, whoever it is."

"Then tell him that I have gone—that I went to New York with my mother."

"Tell who, child?"

"The policeman!"

"The policeman!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith as she glanced at her boarder suspiciously. "Why, what on earth does a policeman want here, I should like to know?" and without another word, she hastened to open the door, while Bertie staggered across the room and sought to fly away, but fell prone upon the floor, right in the doorway.

The daughter of Mrs. Smith ran to the young girl's assistance, and was seeking to quiet and reassure her when the mistress of the house returned, and with a laugh, said:

"It was only Muzz's man, who wanted to borrow a bridle."

Bertie had not fainted, and upon hearing these words her courage returned, and raising to her feet, she returned and resumed her seat.

For a few moments, silence followed, but at length Mrs. Smith said:

"There was something very mysterious in your language a few moments ago, Miss Lander. If you anticipate the appearance of a police man, you must have committed some criminal act to cause such an expectation. Excuse me if I speak plainly, but you must know that this is no home for you and your mother if you are fugitives from justice."

"I am not a fugitive from justice," replied Bertie, quickly. "I am a fugitive from a wicked man who is persecuting me."

"So Mr. Tremaine told me, and I believed him; but if your story is true, why are you afraid of the appearance of an officer?"

"This afternoon my mother and I saw a villainous-looking man standing at the gate, who was partly dressed in a policeman's uniform. We believe it to be a disguise, and that he is but an agent of the bad man who would work our ruin; and this is the reason that my mother has gone to New York."

"Then you thought that the summons came from the man whom you saw at the gate this afternoon, and not a regular officer?"

"I did."

"You certainly are the last person whom I would suspect of crime, and yet you must remember that you and your mother are strangers to us, as well as Mr. Tremaine."

"I never did a wrong act in my life."

"I believe you, child; but you must admit that your actions a moment ago were suspicious."

"I may be compelled to do many suspicious things, but I am as innocent of crime as your own daughter."

"Again I say that I believe you, and your mother will find a friend in me; and it may be that I can serve you better if you will more fully confide in me."

"You must ask confidence from my mother.

Half an hour later, the three females retired to their several rooms.

The room which Bertie entered was a large bed-chamber, and, as previously stated, the window upon the side opened upon an extension, or wing building, which extended laterally from the main house.

Despite the commonplace denouement to the sudden rapping at the door, Bertie had not fully recovered from her feeling of apprehension.

Once within her room, she securely fastened the door, and then went to each window and saw that they also were secured as firmly as permitted.

Having made doors and windows secure, she went to her trunk, and opening it took out a small Derringer pistol, a present from the Gypsy Detective—a weapon which he had taught both her and her mother how to charge and fire.

Like an expert, she examined the pistol, and, seemingly satisfied that it was all right, she cocked it, and placed it under the pillow of her bed.

Then, carefully, she began to disrobe, at the same time going occasionally to the window, and glancing out through the blinds, to discover whether she could see any one moving without.

At last, after having said her prayers, she turned down the fluid lamp and got into bed.

Here she tossed restlessly; sleep was seemingly as far from her at this moment as it had been at mid-day.

At length she rose from the bed and went to the window, and opening the blinds, gazed about in every direction.

All was still; not an unusual sound broke the usual quiet of midnight.

Again she returned to her bed, and this time, without any effort, finally dozed off into a peaceful sleep.

An hour passed, when suddenly, with a start, she awoke, and the first object her eyes rested upon was the dark outlines of a man's figure standing over her trunk, while upon the table was a dark-lantern, the shield partly closed, while through the remaining space flashed a sharp ray of light.

Weak girl as she was, she did not scream, but mentally exclaimed:

"*The peril has come!*"

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE man was standing with his back toward her, and was evidently not aware that she was awake.

Bertie *was* awake, and with a wondrous nerve, born of despair, noiselessly placed her hand under her pillow, and drew forth the cocked pistol, at the same time keeping her eyes fastened upon the masked villain who was deliberately ransacking her trunk.

A grunt, in a suppressed tone, fell from the monster's lips, as he displayed, one after another, the comparatively valueless articles which the trunk contained, as though he was maddened at the poor prospect of a rich booty.

In the present century there are but few children who have not read, time and again, of adventures with burglars in one's room after midnight.

Bertie was not an exception to this multitude, and her reading had taught her that under present circumstances her best course was to remain perfectly quiet and feign sleep.

She knew that she did not have much to lose, and even at that fearful moment she was sufficiently cool and self-possessed to argue that possibly the rascal, upon finding that he had fallen upon so poor a victim, would steal away as noiselessly as he had come.

Bertie still held the cocked pistol in her hand, but had hidden it beneath the coverlet of the bed.

Calmly she closed her eyes, and simulated sleep as composedly as though taking an after-dinner rest

Still within her grasp she held her weapon, and as she lay there she was fully resolved, if necessity called for defense, she would shoot as determinedly as though she were a man; instead of an inexperienced girl of seventeen.

Occasionally she would slyly unclose her eyelids and peep cautiously out to see if the burglar had gone.

And so the moments passed.

It was at that weird hour of the night when even the ticking of a clock can be heard by a wakeful person at the remotest part of the house.

The robber concluded his examination of all the articles contained in the trunk, and had not found one worth the trouble of a first-class "cracksman" like himself; and in the flickering glare of his own dark-lantern his disgust was plainly visible upon his villainous visage.

Having found nothing in the trunk, he commenced rummaging the bureau drawers.

There was but little in the latter, and the thief was about turning from them also in disgust when his eye chanced to rest upon an object which caused him to utter a grunt of surprise.

This exclamation caused Bertie to peep out to see what had caused it, when, with a cold tremor creeping over her, she observed that the burglar was holding a photograph of herself in the full glare of the flash of light from his lantern, and was gloating over it with a look of fiendish triumph upon his face, which gave the latter an expression so devilish and hideous that her heart fairly stood still with terror.

It was evident that the scoundrel was extremely delighted at something, and it did not appear probable that his satisfaction arose from the mere fact of beholding the photograph of a handsome female face.

Bertie's curiosity at this particular moment was even greater than her terror, and forgetting her precaution, she opened her eyes wide, and gazed in astonishment at the further movements of the intruder in her room.

The latter's movements were certainly exceedingly marvelous even for a thief.

After gazing at the photograph for a full minute, as described, he put his hand in his vest pocket and drew forth another *carte de visite*, and critically compared this latter with the one he had taken from the bureau drawer, then, involuntarily, he audibly muttered:

"By Jove, my hearty! there ain't no mistake between them two picters. And, now, where is the original?"

The mere fact of having a robber in one's room after midnight, under ordinary circumstances, was sufficiently horrifying, but when Bertie saw the villain compare the two pictures and then utter the significant words recorded she would have screamed outright had not all her powers been paralyzed.

The fearfulness of her peril was inconceivable as she lay there with dilating eyes, her glance fascinated toward the monster who certainly meant her some desperate harm.

The part of the room where the bed was situated was in a corner beyond the radius of the flash of light from the villain's lantern, consequently his movements were perfectly visible to Bertie, while the bed upon which she lay was shrouded in a partial gloom, and its outlines but indistinctly visible.

Slowly the ruffian raised his lamp, and flashed its rays about the room, when, impelled more by a sense of terror than of safety, Bertie closed her eyes.

An instant later she became conscious that the robber's light was flashed directly upon her countenance.

Although powerless to move, her senses were keenly awake, and in the dead stillness of that room, with closed eyes, she could almost unerringly note each movement of the wretch.

The robber was very deliberate in all of his movements.

Slowly he moved his lantern around until its gleam fell upon the foot of the bedstead.

Then as deliberately he moved it forward until its rays fell upon the face of the seeming sleeper.

The burglar moved stealthily one or two steps nearer the bed, with the light from his lantern thrown over, but not directly on Bertie's face, lest the direct rays might awaken her.

Critically the villain surveyed every lineament of her face, and at length murmured:

"By Jove! it's her to a dot."

Nearer he advanced to the bed, when suddenly Bertie's eyes opened, and, at the same instant, her power returned, and she was just on the point of uttering a scream when the robber exclaimed, in a low, distinct voice:

"Be silent, and you are safe; utter one cry and it will be fatal for you!"

The scream was frozen suddenly upon Bertie's lips.

Again the robber spoke:

"Now, see here, young lady, I want a little conversation with you; on my honor, as a gentleman" (thieves feel themselves gentlemen), "I will not harm you unless you make an outcry; besides, a scream would not do you any good, as there are only three women in the house besides yourself and they are powerless to help you. Will you be reasonable and answer me a few questions?"

Bertie suddenly became marvelously self-possessed and cool, and she answered as she more firmly grasped the cocked pistol beneath her pillow.

"What can you possibly have to say to me?"

"By Jove! miss, you are a cool 'un. Well, I want to ask you one or two questions, and if you act like a sensible person you will be all hunky in the end."

"Well, speak."

"And you won't scream?"

"Not if you refrain from coming any nearer to my bedside than you are at present."

"That's a bargain, but mind, if you go back on me, and squeal, I'll kill you, sure! Now, mind that. By Jove! I want you to understand that I ain't fooling."

"Ask your questions quick; but stop, one moment. After I have answered you will you leave as you came?"

"By Jove! I will. On my honor."

"Then speak."

"Is your name Bertie Lander?"

This was the question Bertie had expected, and she was not surprised.

## CHAPTER XX.

BERTIE fully possessed all of her faculties, and hesitated before replying to this remarkable question.

She revolved in her mind, rapidly, the facts of the case.

It was evident that this wretch in her room was not a representative of the law, but a common burglar. And yet he had recognized her picture, and had, as she concluded, compared it with a facsimile which he had brought with him.

If he was not in search of her as an escaped convict, what then was his purpose?

Like a glimmer of sunlight through a rift of clouds the truth flashed upon her.

This evil villain must be an accomplice of the evil man who was seeking the destruction of her mother and herself.

The robber became impatient, and he exclaimed:

"Come, miss, you have not answered my question. Is your name Bertie Lander?"

"Why do you wish to know?"

"It was not a part of a bargain that I should tell you, only I asked certain questions."

"But I have not agreed to answer your questions yet."

"It will be safer for you if you do answer them."

"And place myself in the power of a foe of your stamp?"

"How do you know that I am your foe?"

"Friends do not steal into young ladies' bedrooms after midnight with dark lanterns and bowie-knives."

"By Jove, miss, but you are a cool 'un! You'd make a bully pal for a 'knuck' like me! You're game, you are."

Bertie felt that she was deserving of this compliment from the wretch, as she was really astonished at her own coolness.

"I may be a burglar, miss, but that don't make it certain that I am your foe. I may be a friend in disguise."

"Your disguise is certainly not very reassuring."

"That's so, by Jove! but see here, I know that you are Miss Lander, because you can't go back on your own darned handsome features, no how!"

"Well, suppose that I admit that I am Bertie Lander, what do you wish to gain by the knowledge?"

"Well, that's just what I'm thinking. I say, have you and your friends got any money?"

"Why should I let you know it if they had, so that you could plunder them?"

"Not exactly; but in case they had, they might buy me to keep a still tongue in my head."

"You speak in riddles!"

"Do I? Well, I'll try and make my meaning plainer. Do you know that there's a rich old 'cull' in New York who will give a nice little rake for information as to where you are hiding just at present."

"Indeed!"

"Oh, you know well enough that I speak the truth. There's a man in New York wants you."

"And who, pray, is that man who has such a strange interest in my whereabouts?"

"Well, old Scragg is the man who will pay down the duplex; but he has a bigger 'cull' behind him who is the real paymaster, I reckon."

"Well, what does all this amount to?"

"That I have found you, and by giving information can jerk up the green plums."

"Admitting all you say is true, how can I prevent you?"

"By paying me more money to keep mum than Scraggs will pay me to squeal."

"How much money do you want?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Will you come here to-morrow, and in the meantime I will consult with my friends, and let you know what they will do."

The burglar laughed outright as he said:

"By Jove! you're innocent, or else you think that I'm a fakir."

"What difference does it make to you as long as you get the money?"

"The difference that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush."

"You are speaking in riddles again."

"Am I? Well, I'll speak plain again, then. What I mean is this, I must have that money to-night, or I must take you and give you up."

Bertie fastened her eyes upon the villain, and at the same moment her finger toyed with the trigger of the weapon under the coverlet.

The whole intent of the scoundrel was patent to her, and, girl as she was, she had already divined the incentive which animated him.

Bartley Gray had furnished photographs of her, and had offered a reward for her capture—a large sum, undoubtedly.

This scoundrel had accidentally, in his thieving excursion, discovered her, and now he was going to get a large reward for keeping his secret, or he was going to make sure of the lesser sum by carrying her off bodily, and delivering her to her arch-enemy.

She knew that she had a cruel, cunning villain to deal with—a rascal who would not fear to risk any chance to win, and who would not take any chances to lose.

She also knew well enough that her friends could not raise five hundred dollars, let alone five thousand, and with a remarkably heroic spirit she determined to rely upon her pistol alone for safety.

In short, with the coolness of a more experienced and ordinarily braver person, she resolved to shoot the robber before she would yield.

Still she determined to delay until the last moment her final desperate expedient, and she said:

"How can you expect me to have five thousand dollars to deliver to you at this moment, and under these circumstances?"

"You are a rich heiress, ain't you? or else why would that old 'cull,' your guardian, I suppose, be so anxious to find you?"

"No, I am not a rich heiress. I am only a poor working girl, without one hundred dollars at my command."

"Then you can't give me a few diamonds or something of that sort?"

"I have no diamonds."

"Are you playing me or are you telling me the truth?"

"I am telling the truth."

"Then your pretty face is the game, eh?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that some rich old chap has taken a fancy to a poor gal with a handsome face, and is willing to pay a big stake to find her."

Incautiously Bertie, supposing that finding it was such a poor game, the villain would be discouraged, replied that such was the fact.

"Well, then," said the villain, coolly, "as you can't pay the money, I suppose the man who can must win!" And he made one step nearer the bed.

"Hold!" cried Bertie. "on your life do not come one step nearer!"

"Dear me, sissy, don't speak so loud; you know what I told you I would do if you squealed!"

"Do not come a step nearer, foolish man, or all sinful as you are, I will kill you in your tracks!"

"Miss, I don't scare worth a cent!" replied the burglar, and he made another step toward her bedside.

## CHAPTER XXI.

With a low cry Bertie drew the pistol from beneath her pillow, and aiming it directly at his heart, exclaimed:

"Fool! I am not helpless! I know how to use this pistol! And, now, instantly leave this room, or I will send a bullet through your heart!"

The robber recoiled a step; this was an unexpected denouement—a situation in the play that he had not counted upon at all.

"Well, you *are* a cool 'un!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I am cool enough for you, man, just at this moment; and so you had better make off at once! I am becoming impatient to see you go!"

"Would you really shoot me down like a dog!"

"I would."

"Well, all right, miss. I do not wish to be shot, so I guess that I will go. Good-night."

Instantly the ruffian shut to the slide of his lantern, when the room was shrouded in an impenetrable gloom.

So dark was it that Bertie could not distinctly recognize an object the length of her arm.

The brave girl had not been prepared for this ruse, and with cold chills chasing over her form, she felt that she was at the mercy of the villain.

She attempted to cry for help, but the robber exclaimed:

"Hold on, miss! Stick to your bargain! Give me a chance to get away, or I will shoot you! I've got you covered!"

"Are you really going?"

"Yes, I am really going; so don't scream."

A moment passed—a moment fraught with an agony of terror too fearful to realize.

The darkness had completely confused and bewildered Bertie, and she lay with dilating eyes, still clasping the pistol, when suddenly she felt something thrust upon her face, completely enveloping it; the next instant all was a blank, she had sunk into a state of unconsciousness.

Then a voice sounded through the room:

"By Jove! but she was a game one!"

And the speaker flashed the light from his dark-lantern upon the marble features of the girl, who lay motionless and at his mercy.

With the coolness of a butcher dressing a slaughtered lamb, the rascal who had chloroformed this lovely girl deliberately and dexterously took a large handkerchief and tied it again and again until he had formed a large knot in the center.

He then forced the knot into the unconscious girl's mouth, and carrying the two remaining ends under her head, tied them, thus as securely gagging her, as though he had possessed a ready-made article for the purpose.

Fortunately Bertie had but partly disrobed, and had thrown a loose dressing-gown over her upon retiring, so that she was virtually dressed.

Having thus gagged her, the robber tied her delicate hands together, and then, with a grunt of satisfaction, remarked:

"Now then, Tom Baird, if you don't pull that two thousand out of old Scragg, you're a bungler, that's all."

Proceeding to the window overlooking the extension previously mentioned, Tom Baird glanced out for a moment, and then, seemingly satisfied, returned to the bed, and lifting the form of Bertie in his arms, moved stealthily and lightly across the room to the same window again.

It was but a few feet down to the roof of the extension from the window-sill, and the villain had but little difficulty in passing through with his burden, and soon stood in the open air.

Moving swiftly across the roof, he reached that portion which overlooked the roof of the portico.

He leaped with his burden down upon the latter, and from thence jumped down upon a flower-bed of soft earth.

The robber was a strong, powerful man, and the light form of Bertie was but as a parcel in his brawny grasp.

The leap with her from the roof of the portico to the ground did not appear to even cause his iron frame the slightest jar, and with a firm, rapid step, he moved away down the garden-path toward the road, chuckling audibly at the success of his daring abduction.

It was a moonless night, although the stars shone forth clear and bright; and having once reached the road, the scoundrel who had committed such a high-handed outrage proceeded along more slowly.

While passing along the road, and when about two hundred yards from the house from which he had stolen the girl, he heard voices and glancing up the road, saw several men coming toward him.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, in an undertone "I was just in time so far, but may be too late yet, if their royal nibses catch a glimpse of me!" and he darted beneath the shadow of the trees which lined the road.

As he did so, the men whom he had seen suddenly increased their pace, and came rushing down the road at a brisk run.

Arriving at a point a few yards beyond where the ruffian had darted aside with his victim, they came to a halt, and the cowering villain heard one of them remark:

"By thunder, Bob! I tell you I saw the form of a man on the road ahead of us a moment ago."

"If you saw him, where is he now?"

"Dodged out of sight, I suppose. But hang me if he can be far off."

"I guess you only saw a stray cow, Rufe."

"No, sir; I saw the figure of a man; and as he dodged out of the way, that is a sure sign that he was loafing around here with no good purpose."

At this moment a cow moved out from the shadow of the trees just ahead of where the men had come to a halt, and with a loud laugh, one of them exclaimed:

"I told you, old man, that you had been fooled by a cow."

"Let's take a look through the hedge first, and make sure that I am mistaken."

"Nonsense! It would only be a waste of time."

"Won't you help me make a search round here?"

"No; I will not." And the speaker moved down the road.

"Well, all right, but if you find that something is missing from the house, or barn, in the morning, you will not thank yourself for being so anxious to get home."

Cowering far back in the shadow beneath the trees, the robber heard every word of the foregoing conversation, and thanked his ears and that stray cow for his fortunate escape from discovery.

There were another pair of ears that heard those voices also.

Bertie had returned to consciousness, and then powerless to utter the faintest cry, owing to the ingenious mode in which her abductor had bound her, she lay helpless in his arms, with three sturdy men, who would have rescued her at the peril of their own lives, within a few feet from her.

Like drops of water, ceaselessly dripping upon the head of a criminal doomed to such a horrid mode of death, the retreating footsteps of the three men sounded upon Bertie's ears, and she felt in that moment as though her brain would literally burst from the effects of the fearful agony that racked it.

Speedily the retreating footsteps of the men passed beyond hearing, when the robber again took to the road, and proceeded along until he came to a place where a steep pair of steps led down to the shore.

As he placed his foot upon the toy platform and was about to descend, a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a low voice inquired:

"Hold on! Where are you going?"

## CHAPTER XXII.

The robber came to a halt, and his disengaged hand sought the handle of the knife stuck in his belt, when the same voice continued:

"Hold on, I say, chummie! Where are you going?"

"By Jove! Frog, is that you?"

"It's me, sure, chummie. What—what the devil have you got in your arm? That's different kind of swag than you generally nip."

"All right, Frog, my boy; but this is a valuable nip, I guess; but, hang it, daylight is near at hand, man, and we must get away, or we'll have a regiment of Yanks, with double-barrel guns, at our heels."

"What are you going down that way for? the wagon is over at the cross-roads."

"All right for the wagon, cull, but I'm going to borrow a boat, and when I'm done with it, I'll set it adrift. It may not return home like a faithful dog, but it will float down this way with the tide."

"But what shall I do?"

"Go to the wagon and make tracks for the

city as fast as possible, as there will be the highest old hunt for strangers for miles around here, in just a few hours, that you ever heard tell on; by Jove, there will!"

"That's all right, too, bub, but you ain't going to give me the shake this way, if there's any money in what you've got in your arms! I'm going to call your hand, that's all."

"I ain't up to giving you any shake, but if you don't take my advice, we will both get a shaking that will last us twenty years!"

"Look! I've dropped to what you've got there. That's the gal Scragg is on the lookout for!"

"You're right!"

"Well, where are you going to take her?"

"To where she will be safe until old Scragg comes down with the stuff; he's tricky."

"That's straight enough; but look here, chummie, have I got a rake in on this lay out?"

"Of course; did you ever know Tom Baird to go back on anybody?"

"Where are you going to take her?"

"To Nigger Paul's. Will that do?"

"Yes, that will do! but don't you want me to help you off?"

"You can."

Ten minutes later, a cat-rigged sail-boat glided away from the small private dock which was built from the beach at this particular point.

In this boat was the ruffian Baird and his victim, Bertie Lander, and the scoundrel who held the helm headed his little craft out to sea, while his late companion, whom he had called Frog, stole away through the darkness toward the Gravesend cross-roads.

It was between ten and eleven o'clock when Mrs. Lander reached New York upon the same night when the events happened which have been above described.

She had crossed by the Hamilton ferry-boat, and landed in New York at the foot of Whitehall Street.

As previously intimated, the Gypsy Detective had told Mrs. Lander where to communicate with him, in case any sudden emergency should arise when his services should be required.

The former was just about to enter a Broadway stage when she saw a face which caused her to change her intention.

The face she saw was that of the old man, Scragg, and instead of entering the omnibus she passed around it, and crossing over to the opposite side of the street, took a position where she could, unobserved, watch the movements of the old rascal, who had, as she had since learned, been the one who trumped up the charge which led to her daughter's conviction for larceny

Another reason impelled her to watch his movements.

She knew that the Gypsy Detective was constantly piping the old man, and she thought it possible that she might more readily find him, under the circumstances, by watching old Scragg.

She had had the old man under observation but a few moments, when she became satisfied that the yellow-faced villain was up to some kind of mischief.

Thus full fifteen minutes passed, when she saw a man come out of one of the saloons near by, and after casting a furtive glance up and down the street, walk up and hold a few moment's conversation with the old fellow whom she was watching.

It required but a brief survey to convince her that the new-comer was none other than Bartley Gray, the arch-enemy of her daughter and herself.

While Gray and Scragg stood talking together, a German, evidently an emigrant, and a recent arrival, came up from toward Greenwich Street, and crossing over to the Battery, leaned against the railing surrounding that pleasure park.

Mrs. Lander would not have bestowed more than one glance upon this latter individual, were it not for the fact that she speedily became convinced that, for some reason or other, the latter individual was actually watching the movements of the same parties whom she had under surveillance.

Gray and Scragg remained talking but a few moments, when they separated.

Gray went up Broadway, and a few moments later, Scragg started in the same direction; and what was still more remarkable, the emigrant also followed, a moment later, in the same direction.

A singular instinct impelled Mrs. Lander to follow the other three, concluding that, even if she did not meet the detective, she might discover some other fact that would prove valuable to the latter, as she was more and more convinced that some kind of a game was to be played.

Up past Bowling Green walked Bartley Gray, and a hundred yards in the rear followed Scragg, who was again followed, at about the same distance, by the emigrant, while Mrs. Lander managed to keep near enough to hold both of the latter in sight.

Situated on Broadway, in the vicinity of Trinity Church, is a large express office, and beside the large building wherein this office is located, there runs an alley-way.

At night this latter place is unlighted, and dark and dismal.

Upon arriving opposite this city lane, Bartley Gray hesitated a moment, and after casting a furtive glance up and down the street, darted in, and disappeared in the darkness.

A few moments later he was followed by old Scragg, after the latter had acted in the same mysterious manner as the lawyer.

Mrs. Lander expected to see the emigrant follow also, but when she came to look for that singular man she discovered that he had mysteriously vanished, as though he had suddenly sunk into the ground.

The brave woman was now more and more convinced that some piece of desperate villainy was about to be perpetrated; and a strange instinct warned her that her own and her daughter's interests were in some mysterious manner connected with the movements of these two men.

Mrs. Lander was a woman of courage and nerve, and once convinced that it was her duty to watch the two villains she was prepared to brave anything.

Thus minded, she arrived opposite to the dark passage-way down which the two men had disappeared, and after a moment's hesitation and a silent prayer for protection, she plunged forward, determined to follow even with death staring her in the face.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Two hours earlier, upon the same evening when the events occurred above described, the night watchman of the express office alluded to in the previous chapter was going his rounds to see that everything was secure, when he stumbled over the form of a man stretched out upon the floor between two boxes of goods.

"What the tuyful you doing here?" exclaimed the watchman, as he dealt the prostrate form a vigorous kick.

Up jumped the stowaway, and in extremely broken Dutch, exclaimed:

"I was sleeping."

The watchman chanced to be a German, and at once addressed the man in his native tongue.

"Well, how did you happen to get in here to take a nap?"

"The door was open and I walked in!" was the innocent reply.

The speaker was about as green a specimen of a recently-arrived Dutchman as is generally met with.

The watchman at once concluded, from the man's appearance, that, in his ignorance and innocence, he had come into the office before it was closed, and had, unobserved by any of the clerks, stowed himself away for a nap.

Under ordinary circumstances, the watchman would have called in the police and given the greenhorn in charge, but being such an inoffensive looking chap, and a countryman of his own, he concluded to merely turn him out, and let the matter pass.

A few more questions developed the fact that the emigrant was from the same country as himself, and before he was aware of it, the watchman found himself gliding into an extended conversation with the stranger.

The two fellow-countrymen at length became quite sociable and familiar, and it was finally arranged that the emigrant should remain and keep the watchmen company for the balance of the night.

They were wandering about the large storehouse, when they came to a certain little office, on the counter of which, facing the main-room, were two singular-looking little brass machines.

These latter appeared to excite the curiosity of the greenhorn, and his new-found friend informed him that they were telegraph machines, and he explained their nature to him.

During this explanation, there was a singularly cunning twinkle in the emigrant's eye, which, if the watchman had observed, would have made him exceedingly suspicious of his innocent-appearing countryman.

"What is this one for?" asked the greenhorn.

"To communicate with the main telegraph office."

"And this one?"

"That one is connected with the police office, and a signal upon that would summon a dozen officers to the building in less than five minutes."

"How do you work?" inquired the emigrant, with a bland-like innocence, and he was about to place his hand upon the key-board, when the watchman exclaimed

"Heh! heh! hold! Don't touch that, or you will give an alarm!"

The watchman was not a very shrewd man, or else he must have observed a strange significance in the Dutchman's curiosity and actions.

About an hour passed, when the emigrant produced some money and proposed that they should have some beer.

Beer, as is well known, is at all times a German's weakness, and the watchman readily acquiesced in his companion's proposition, and it was finally agreed that the latter should go out and get liquid refreshment.

The watchman's new-found friend went out, but did not return quite as quickly as was expected; but he did return, and in a most unexpected and remarkable manner, as will be detailed in what is to come.

Cautiously Mrs. Lander stole down the alley-way, the hour being, as near as she could guess, between twelve and one o'clock, more time having been consumed in dodging around by the rascals than would at first thought be supposed.

The brave woman was brought to a sudden halt by hearing low voices, although she could see no one.

Determined to follow the adventure to the end, she dropped upon her hands and knees, and actually crept forward on all fours, like an Indian stealing through laurel-brush on the mountain-side.

Thus she crept along for a few yards, when she observed the outlines of two human forms, and drawing a little nearer, she discerned, also, that they were standing beside an open grating, which led down to the vaults beneath the express office.

She observed further, that the head and shoulders of a third man protruded through the opening, and at once concluded that a robbery was intended, that the emigrant was but a confederate in disguise, and that by some mysterious mode the latter had gained an entrance into the building, and was thus admitting the other two villains.

Most persons, upon making the above discoveries, would have at once given the alarm, but for certain reasons Mrs. Lander, who was a rapid thinker, determined to do no such thing.

Two motives governed her actions—curiosity, and a determination to wait until her arch-enemy was fully committed to an act of highway robbery, when, at the proper moment, she was determined that he should be caught when there was no chance for escape, or evasion of the penalty.

For some moments the three men remained in consultation, when, finally, both let themselves down through the opening and disappeared from view.

Still regardless of consequences, Mrs. Lander boldly advanced and peered down into the dark abyss which yawned before her.

After a moment, not hearing their voices, she let herself down, and actually followed the three highwaymen into the cellar beneath the express office.

Our readers will not consider the daring of Mrs. Lander so extraordinary, when they remember that she was a woman who had become inured to hardships and startling scenes; and that, furthermore, she was battling for the safety of her child's life and fortune.

It was but a slight descent from the alley-way down the grating to the half-way base; but when the daring woman went to let herself into the cellar proper, after lowering herself to the full extent of her arms, she found that there was quite a space still beneath her.

It was too late now to measure chances.

She could not recover her position, and although certain death yawned beneath, of no

cessity she would have been compelled to drop unresistingly into it.

She let go her hold, and came down with a force that jarred her delicate frame terribly; but after a moment she was satisfied that no bones were broken, and rising to her feet, glanced around to see if she could discover anything of the villains whom she was following.

All around her was impenetrable gloom, except far forward she thought she saw the uncertain glimmer of a light.

"It's now to trap this villain, or to pay the penalty of my resolution," she murmured, as with a stealthy step she moved toward the faint ray of light.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

NOISELESSLY Mrs. Lander moved along, and daringly came so close to the three villains, that only the thin boards of a stall, or bin, divided her from them.

Thus, while gazing through a knot hole in the partition, she saw a sight which caused her blood to curdle and chill in her veins, and heard a conversation of such a bloody significance that she was forced to believe the rascals meant murder as well as robbery.

All three were huddled around a lantern which sat upon the floor.

Old Scragg held a long, murderous knife in his hand, the edge of which he was testing, while Bartley Gray was examining the lock of a pistol.

The third man whose features were hidden behind a half mask, held a stout iron knobbed bludgeon in his hand, which he swung around dexterously, making feints at several objects, as though, in a manner, for practice.

"And does Lawyer Gray associate with common robbers? And are his needs so great that he himself has become a burglar?" were the thoughts which filled Mrs. Lander's brain as she watched the movements of three determined house breakers.

And mentally she asked herself whether it was possible that she had ever looked upon this man as a friend, or had ever for a moment doubted the truth of the Gypsy Detective's statement's concerning him.

It was as much as she could do to restrain herself from screaming outright, as she fully realized the real bloody purpose of the robbers and assassins.

Fortunately, she was cool-headed enough to know that such a course would accomplish no good just at this moment, but might result in her becoming the first victim of the cruel murderers.

After a moment's silence, Bartley Gray spoke; his voice was husky and his articulation thick, showing that he had drank considerable to screw his courage up to a point to permit him to undertake the dangerous job in which he was engaged.

"Are you sure, Scragg, that there is but one watchman in this building?"

"I vos sure dot there vos but one vatchman to-night, 'cause you know I tought dot it vos easier to settle mit von den mit two; but I put up a liddle shob dot vill keep de udder feller away for to-night! ya-a-s!" and the old man he-he'd at his own cuteness and wit.

"Now then, the next thing to settle is, are you sure that the specie was sent under cover of an ordinary box, so as to avoid suspicion?"

"Mine gootness gra-a-cious, how funny you shentlemen ver! Don't I dell you all de time dot I vos sure! Now, shust look here: de pank in Baltimore was cracked last Friday veek! Well, de boys dey laid low for two or three tays; den dey makes up der mindt dot it vos better dot dey sendt de specie to Ni-Yorck all right! Scragg he vos laying aroundt, and he pick up so much among de poys; den he foundt out shust how de pox would be marked; dot vos all right, too! Well, de next ting I comes down mit de hexpress office, and der I see the very pox marked shust so dot I herdt—in von common dry-goods box! Den it vos dot I make up mine mindt dot it vould pe a goot joke dot we rob the robbers; and here we are ready for dot liddle shob!"

Old Scragg's story explains the mission of the three miscreants.

A number of regular cracksmen had robbed a bank, and had sent the proceeds to New York in a common dry-goods box to avoid suspicion. He had fallen into their purpose, and had put up a job with Gray and another to steal the booty from the original thieves and appropriate it themselves.

"You are sure that you have had your eye on the right box, Scragg?"

The speaker was the man in the mask.

"I dell you I vos sure!"

"What is the hour, Gray?"

"After twelve o'clock."

"And what time do they change the patrol?"

"At twelve o'clock, I believe."

"Then Reicksler is on the beat now?"

"He must be."

"All right, my lads; the road is clear, and now for the swag!"

"My gootness gra-a-cious!" exclaimed Scragg, with a chuckle. "I feel like laughing all over mit mine pody!"

"Why?"

"Cause I tink dis liddle snap will go through all right, and for once the Gypsy Detective vos not shust in time like he alvays vos."

"We are not quite through yet!" muttered the masked man, with an oath. "We may have to smash a conk yet, before the swag is ours!" and as he spoke he swung his bludgeon threateningly.

Cautiously and with noiseless step, the three burglars raised their lantern and moved toward the stairway leading to the store above.

Upon reaching the head of the stairs, they shaded their lantern and stole slowly forward, when all three dropped down behind a bale of goods which lay near the main gangway of the store.

Like a cat the devoted woman who was upon their track stole after them, and finding a good spot, crouched down quite near to them, and awaited events.

Presently a step was heard, when she overheard one of the robbers whisper:

"That is the watchman, and he is coming this way! Now lay low, and keep your eyes peeled!"

The watchman's step was heard as he moved from one part of the store to the other, and finally the woman who was watching became convinced that the doomed man was nearing the spot where his intended assassins lay in ambush.

"Now is my time to give the alarm!" thought Mrs. Lander, as nearer and nearer approached the steps.

She saw the masked villain partly raise himself and also lift his club.

She sought to scream, but alas! nervous excitement had overcome every faculty but hearing and eyesight.

She was speechless!

She sought to move forward, but the powers of locomotion failed her.

She could not move one step; and still nearer and nearer she heard the unguarded watchman come toward the spot where the men were lying concealed.

"Don't make any mistake, mine friend!" she heard old Scragg whisper.

The approaching footsteps ceased.

"Thank God!" was the mental ejaculation of Mrs. Lander; but still so paralyzed was she by the intenseness of her emotion that she could neither move nor speak.

A minute passed—an awful space of time under the circumstances.

The woman began to think that the watchman had discovered his peril.

But again the steps were heard, and the man was only a few feet distant.

At that instant the would-be savior recovered her powers and a shrill scream resounded through the store-house.

## CHAPTER XXV.

MRS. LANDER'S shriek of warning came just one second too late.

Simultaneous with her cry of warning, there might have been heard a dull thud, followed by a fall.

In the intense excitement of the moment, the three burglars did not appear to have heard the woman's scream, and the moment the poor watchman fell to the floor, all three proceeded to search for their booty.

They had proceeded but a few steps, when a flash of gaslight illuminated the room, and the robbers were confronted by a man dressed in the garb of an emigrant.

Without a moment's hesitation, all three made a rush at this latter individual, who retreated backward toward the point where the telegraph instruments were upon the counter.

Here he halted, and stood with his hands behind him when old Scragg exclaimed, as the masked burglar moved toward him:

"Look owdt! dot vos the Gypsy Detective! shust in time, by tam! Look out, he'll shoot!"

"I'll shoot first, then!" exclaimed Gray, and he raised his pistol, when suddenly there came a whir—whir—tic-tic-tic.

"Oh, mine gootness gracious!" yelled Scragg, "I know vot dot vos!" and away he rushed followed by Gray, who did not even stop to pull the trigger of the pistol which he had leveled.

The masked burglar also attempted to fly, but as he turned, a pair of wiry arms encircled his body and he was held fast.

A struggle now ensued between the burglar and the seeming emigrant, but it was only for a few seconds that it lasted.

The robber was a large powerful man, and quickly bore his antagonist to the ground, when, with his knee upon the latter's chest, he exclaimed, with an oath:

"Let go your hold, fool! or you will pay dearly for your rashness!"

The undermost man still clung to the other, when suddenly his arm was seized, and at the same moment several shrill whistles were heard, and half a dozen policemen came tramping down through the store.

An instant later and the robber was captured and handcuffed.

The man who held him rose to his feet, when his eyes fell upon the form of Mrs. Lander.

He uttered but one exclamation of surprise, and then said to the officers:

"Go to the assistance of the watchman! I fear I am a moment too late, and that they have killed him."

"Why, by Jove! Tremaine, is that you?" cried one of the policemen.

"Yes."

"My dear fellow," repeated the officer, who was a sergeant, "this will be a big feather in your cap."

The Gypsy Detective's reply was interrupted by the appearance of a ghastly figure who came staggering toward the group.

It was the watchman, who, the moment his bloodshot eyes fell upon the form of the seeming emigrant, exclaimed:

"Seize that villain! He is the robber!"

A laugh greeted this charge, and it was some time before the poor man was made to understand his mistake, and that the greenhorn was really a skillful detective in disguise.

"The chap was not alone—where are his pals?" asked the sergeant.

"You must ask him," answered the detective. "I did not recognize them."

At this juncture Mrs. Lander was about to speak, and tell that she did, but a warning look from Philip Tremaine caused her, just in time, to hold her peace.

For reasons which will be developed and explained, it suited the Gypsy Detective's plans that Gray and Scragg should escape for the *present*.

The wounded watchman, along with the captured burglar, was taken to the station-house, while a couple of policemen were left in charge of the express office.

In the meantime, the detective, after having given certain directions, left, accompanied by Mrs. Lander.

When alone he asked her why she was in New York.

Mrs. Lander briefly gave her reasons, and then told how she had fallen upon Gray and Scragg, and had followed them.

"And you saved my life!"

"Yes; a strange instinct led me to keep upon their track, and I now know for what purpose."

The detective did not appear to attach much importance to the reasons for Mrs. Lander's coming to New York, but he did to the account she gave of the conversation she overheard between the three robbers.

It led him to believe that he should win fresh laurels by capturing the booty of the Baltimore bank robbers.

We may here state, although the fact has no direct bearing upon our narrative, that such was the result; and the Gypsy Detective's fame for daring and skill became world-wide.

The Gypsy Detective and Mrs. Lander had

walked up Broadway as far as St. Paul's church, and were standing beside the railing, discussing the probabilities, when the latter suddenly exclaimed:

"Suppose that man should prove to be a tool of Bartley Gray's?"

"What suggests that idea to you?" queried the detective.

"I am certain that that man did not come by there by chance. And I am equally certain that from the expression of his face, he recognized Bertie and me!"

The Gypsy Detective uttered a startled exclamation, supplemented with the quick, earnest remark:

"You never told me this important fact until this moment!"

"I thought that I did."

"No, madam; had you told me that you thought the man recognized either of you, I should have started with you at once!"

"We can go now."

"Let me think a moment," said the Gypsy Detective, and after an interval, he added:

"Well, if anything has turned up, this disguise will serve me as good as any other; we will go at once! but wait, are you not too fatigued?"

"No; I am so anxious about Bertie that I feel almost crazy; there has come over me a certain strange premonition of evil, that has chilled my heart as though its veins were icicles!"

Half an hour later Mrs. Lander and the Gypsy Detective were on their way to Bay Ridge.

The startling facts which greeted them upon their arrival will be detailed in the succeeding chapter.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

DAYLIGHT was just breaking, when Mrs. Lander and the Gypsy Detective arrived in sight of the house which had been chosen as a refuge for her and her daughter.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Mrs. Lander, as her eye fell upon the house.

No one appeared to be stirring about the place, and from this fact the anxious mother argued that all was right.

"I am glad, on your account, that we find everything quiet," observed the detective.

"Thank you!" replied Mrs. Lander, adding: "I was afraid, in my nervous state, that we might find the house burned to the ground."

A few moments later, and they had driven to the door

Mrs. Lander entered the house, while the detective drove around to the stable to put up the horse.

The landlady herself opened the door in answer to Mrs. Lander's knock, and in reply to the latter's inquiry, whether anything unusual had happened, said:

"No, madam; and I think that your fears were groundless."

"Where is Bertie?"

"She has not left her room yet this morning."

The anxious mother, though much relieved, proceeded straight to her daughter's room and rapped at the door.

No answer came, and after a moment she rapped again, this time giving a louder knock.

Still no answer.

The mother was startled, and she called.

"Bertie! Bertie! open the door. It is I, your mother."

Still no answer.

"Oh, my God!" murmured the mother; "what means this?" and she tried to open the door, but it was securely locked.

Again she rapped and called, and still not the least movement was heard in the room.

"Something is wrong," cried the mother, and she called for help.

Mrs. Smith, the landlady, and her daughter quickly came up the stairs and inquired what the matter was.

"I can get no answer," was the reply; and she added, "Oh, Heaven! I fear that my poor child is dead."

The landlady tried the door and knocked furiously, and still no answer.

At length she said: "we must call one of the men and force the door in, something certainly must be wrong,"

"Mr. Tremaine is in the stable-yard, call him."

The landlady's daughter started to obey, when she met the detective on the stairway.

He had heard Mrs. Lander's cry, and was hastening to see what the matter was.

"Oh, Philip! Philip!" shrieked Mrs. Lander, "something is wrong. We can not get into Bertie's room."

The detective advanced to the door and kicked against it, at the same time calling, in a loud voice, for admission.

Still no response.

"We must burst in the door," he said, and stepping back, he threw himself against it with great force. It was but an ordinary lock, and gave way at the push.

The detective, from a feeling of delicacy, stepped back and permitted the women folks to enter first.

Mrs. Lander rushed into the room, and one glance satisfied her that something terrible had happened, and she gave utterance to a succession of fearful shrieks, at the same time calling upon the Gypsy Detective.

The latter rushed into the room, and with his usual keenness, shot a lightning-like glance about the room.

There was the bed turned and tumbled just as it had been left by the burglar when he took poor Bertie bound and gagged, from it.

There was the trunk, with its contents also tumbled out upon the floor in reckless confusion, and the bureau drawers opened and rifled, while upon the table stood the burglar's dark-lantern, flashing forth a sickly gleam in the brightening rays of morning.

"What has happened?" exclaimed Mrs. Lander, appealing to the detective.

"My dear madam," answered the detective, without displaying the least excitement, "you must be calm; matters may not be as bad as they seem, and your excitement would not help us to unravel the mystery."

"Oh! but my poor child has been murdered!"

"You are mistaken. Bertie undoubtedly is at this moment alive. I do not believe that a hair in her head has been harmed."

"Then where is my child?"

"That we must find out, and recover her."

"But has she been stolen?"

"Will you be firm if I tell exactly what I believe? and before I tell you, I can assure you that I am not anxious on her account, as I now have a hold upon her abductors which will bring them to terms in a few hours."

"Then you think she has been abducted?"

"I do."

"By Bartley Gray?"

"I can suspect no one else."

"Then let's fly back to New York!"

"Oh, no; not so fast. I must investigate this matter first, and find out what direction the rascals who stole her have taken."

"But how can you find out?"

"The 'how' comes under the head of my professional duties; and now I must request that all of you retire from this room while I gather up my clews, and determine upon some immediate course of action."

All left the room, including Mrs. Lander, although the latter did not consent to leave until the Gypsy Detective firmly insisted upon it.

The detective closed the door, and taking off his coat as coolly and deliberately as a mechanic about to put a new lock on the door, he commenced his operations.

The first thing he did was to examine the bed and its surroundings, and quickly satisfied himself that Bertie had retired without disrobing.

Upon the outside of the bed he found a large knife; this he critically examined, and with a significant whistle, tossed it back.

He now examined the trunk and the bureau, and afterward the dark lantern, proceeding slowly and deliberately all the time.

From the bureau he went to the window, and looked out, then crawled through, and with the unerring directness of a blood-hound upon a human blood trail he walked over to the spot where the robber had let himself down upon the roof of the portico, and from thence to the ground.

For some moments he stood gazing at the spot where the man had leaped down upon the soft flower-bed, and then returned and entered the room.

While putting on his coat, Mrs. Lander entered the room, and her first question was:

"Have you discovered anything?"

In his usual quiet manner, the Gypsy Detective replied:

"Yes. I have discovered something of great importance."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"OH! pray tell me quickly, what have you found out?"

"I have discovered that but one man entered this room last night, and that he was an ordinary burglar who came here with a design for robbery only."

"And then you think that Bertie must have discovered him in her room, and was murdered to prevent her from giving an alarm?"

"No, I do not believe that Bertie has been injured! but I believe that by chance the fellow recognized her, and carried her off to gain the reward offered for her discovery or capture, by Bartley Gray."

"What leads you to this conclusion?"

The detective held up the two photographs which he had found upon the floor.

"What do they indicate?"

"That Bartley Gray has furnished Bertie's pictures to a number of thieves; that one of those thieves entered this room for plunder; that while rifling the drawers of that bureau he found the *fac-simile* of the photograph which he carried, and at once concluded that the sleeping girl in the bed was the original of both pictures."

"And he has carried her to New York and delivered her over to our arch-enemy?"

"Probably; I hope that he has, but we will see."

"See what?"

"Learn which direction the villain took; if she is in the power of Bartley Gray I shall rescue her within twenty-four hours."

"Oh, but they may do her some harm ere we learn where she is concealed."

"Do not fear. I shall buzz a flea in the ear of Scragg and Gray, within four hours, which will make both of them very careful about harming one hair of your daughter's head. I have got both of those men dead to rights; and if this matter had not happened I would have sprung my final trap on them. I believe that now I have all the winning cards to bring them to terms."

"And will you proceed at once?"

"I will; but, madam, you can do nothing; you would but impede my movements, and I must beg of you to remain here quietly, and I will keep you posted concerning every movement."

Having resumed his coat, the Gypsy Detective left the house and going around to where the robber had jumped from the roof of the portico, he succeeded, after two hours of the most skillful study, in tracking the abductor down to the very point where he had embarked in the sail-boat with the girl.

Returning to the house, he held a few minutes further conversation with Mrs. Lander, and after a hurried meal started for New York.

Upon the afternoon after the attempted robbery of the express office, a plainly dressed, heavy-veiled, and seemingly feeble old woman, might have been seen moving slowly up the Bowery.

When near Grand Street, this old body entered a store, over the door of which was a sign bearing the name "A. Scragg, Clothier."

There was a young man in the store behind the counter, a fair representation of his race; and sitting on a stool outside of the counter was a rough, villainous-looking fellow, nervously puffing away at a cigar.

As the old woman entered, the ruffianly-looking fellow remarked to the clerk:

"See here, young fellow, I don't want you to lay over on me; if you know where I can find old Scragg, I want you to tell me."

"I would tell you in a moment—in fact I have told you. Mr. Scragg went to Philadelphia two days ago, to buy some clothing at a sale there."

"And when do you expect him back?"

"I don't know when he will come back."

"Now, I know that you are lying, young fellow; for an old sly fox like Scragg don't go away without leaving word when he will come back."

"All right; if you don't believe my word, you can wait until he comes. I am sure you are welcome to sit there until I close up, if you are a mind to."

At this instant, the clerk observed the old woman hobbling into the store, and going toward her, he said:

"Can I do anything for you, madam?"

"Oh, Frederick, vos dot you?" said the old woman. "Vell, I tought dot I vould findt de store at last!"

Upon being thus addressed, the young man turned slightly pale, and tried to signal to the old woman that there was somebody in the store.

"Oh, yes, vos sure dot I found it oudt at last; but I vos so tired, can you let me sit down, my dear poy?"

The rough-looking man had been eying the old woman, and upon hearing her speak, a knowing smile flitted over his face, and approaching her, he gave her a slap upon the back, saying:

"Ha, ha, old man! you're well got up; but you couldn't deceive one of the lads, nohow!"

Upon being thus addressed, the old woman removed her veil, and disclosed a face which caused the ruffian to start back as though he had suddenly gazed upon the face of the dead.

"Vell, do you vant to speak mit me?" said the old woman.

"No; hang it, I beg your pardon; I took you for another man!"

The old woman he-he'd and said:

"Dot vos strange; you should dake me for anudder man, ven I vos one woman!"

"By Jove, madam, I beg your pardon; but are you Mr. Scragg's wife?"

"May pe I vas his fader, eh? ven you tought dot I vos anudder *man*, eh? but I vos his mudder and not his fader; yah, dot vos right!"

"Do you know where I can find your son?"

"Dot vos a hard question; it was petter dot you ask dot poy vot keeps shop for him."

"Well, hang it!" exclaimed the man; "as I can't find Scragg, I guess that I will go straight to Gray. I'll bet a hundred that he's the man who wants the gal after all!"

"Mine gootness gra-a-cious!" exclaimed the old woman, with a start; "vot you vant mit Mister Gray?"

"Hang me, if I wasn't right at first!" ejaculated the stranger. "You are Scragg, himself, after all!"

"Mine gootness gra-a-cious! don't shpeak so loud mit your mouf! If I vos Scragg, vot you vant mit me?"

"You offered a couple of thousand to find a certain gal?"

"Yaas!" exclaimed Scragg, eagerly.

"*Well, I've got the gal!*"

"Mine gootness! dot vos goot. Vere vos she?"

"That is telling until I get the money."

"Oh, no, Johnny—dot vos blayed oudt mit me! You mus' gif up der gal afore you gits der money."

"I'll cut her throat first!"

"Ded she vos not vorth a cent, and you vould hang, mine frient. I take off one hundred tollar for every harm dot you do dot gal."

"Oh! that's the racket, is it? Well, what guarantee have I got that the money will come all right when the gal is delivered?"

"Vell, I vill gif you von tousand so soon dot I make sure dot you got der gal; den you show her up, and you get de udder two tousand!"

"Is that a go?"

"Dot ish a go."

"All right. You meet me at the Fulton Ferry to-night, and have the money with you —*all of it*—and I will make a clean job of it at once."

"All right, my poy—I vill pe dere; and now it vos petter dot you go. Der vos a frient of mine dot come pretty quick, dot I mus' make pusiness mit."

The rough-looking man left, after a few more words, appointing a meeting, and ten minutes later Bartley Gray entered the store of A. Scragg, clothier.

The lawyer came in hesitatingly, and after casting a look about the store, he said, addressing the clerk:

"Where is Mr. Scragg?"

The clerk nodded significantly toward the old woman, when the lawyer exclaimed:

"Ah, I see," and advancing toward the old woman, he continued, in a low tone: "Old man, the jig's up, or something must be done soon."

"Mine gootness gr-a-cious!" exclaimed Scragg, "how vild you vos, mine friend!"

"Yes, I am wild, and I must have some money. It is necessary for me to leave town to-night."

"Vot for you go avay mit such a hurry, Gray? You vos always so cool—awful cool."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

"You ought to know as well as I do. Why are you in disguise?"

"Oh, mine gootness gr-a-cious, don't you see vy? Cause dot Shipsy Detective might come on me shust in time, eh?"

"And that's just why I want to get away. See here—I have got an idea—I want to see Lander."

Old Scragg gave a start—an almost frightened start—upon hearing these words, and for a moment he did not speak, but pulled the veil down close over his face. At last he spoke, and there was a singular significance in his tone:

"You vant money?"

"Yes; I want money; and when I come back I can pay you every cent I owe you, and a good rake besides; and I can do more."

"Vot can you do more?"

"I can get you clean out of the scrape that we got into last night."

"How can you do that?"

"I have got a card that I have not played yet. Look here, Scragg, I will tell you something. I have led you to believe all the time that I had a man to represent Lander at the last moment, if it became necessary. Now, then, I want you to understand that that was a guy. Lander himself is alive, and a prisoner; the man I have is not a substitute, but the real living father of the girl, whom I represent as trustee."

"Mine gootness gr-a-cious!" exclaimed Scragg; "vot a vonderful story dot vos."

"Well, it's true; and now, let me tell you, that holding this card I can make such terms as will make you and myself rich, and save further risk. A half loaf, you know, is better than none at all, and I think that we can get about seven eighths of this little snap."

"So de gal's fader vos really alife yet?"

"Yes, he is, and I am not a murderer."

"Dot vos better for you," said Scragg.

"And so you gif up de idea dot you haf de gal, Bertie, murdered?"

"Yes, I give that up."

"Well, you gif it up shost in time."

"Why?"

"Because I haf found oudt where we can findt her."

"By Jove! if we could have found her before we got in this last scrape."

"Vot then?"

"We would have fixed things all right."

"Vy not now?"

"It's too late; that infernal Gypsy Detective recognized me last night, and can send both of us to jail for twenty years; he would force me to terms. I will beat him by making terms with the fool who first put all this property into my hands."

"If you tink dot the Gypsy Detective can fix you, how ish dot dot you not hiding now? He vos always aroundt, and might pick you up at any moment."

"I was compelled to take chances to-day; to-morrow I will be fixed to treat with him."

"Do you vant money?"

"Yes; and I must have it, or you will lose every cent that I owe you."

"It vos better dot I lose it den risk more."

"You run no risk, I tell you. I have always held this matter back as a sure thing."

"Look here, Mister Gray, I tink dot game vos up all round. I can not let you have any more money. I vos already ruinedt."

"But this will save you."

"No; I can not see dot. You go and get dis money, den leaf de country, and I can whistle or vait for de crows to sing."

"You're holding back for something, Scragg."

"Ya—a—s, I vos holding pack for somedings."

"Well, out with it."

"If I let you have money, how much do you vant?"

"Five hundred!"

"You can go vere dot man vos for less den one hundred."

"I could not to-day raise twenty dollars."

"May be dot I could not raise ten."

"Bah! that is all humbug. You have got plenty of money."

"But vy do you vant so much?"

"One hundred will do."

"All right. I gif you one hundred if you let me go mit you ven you go to make terms. I would not like dot I effer lose sight mit you until you pay me effery cent dot you owe me."

"You are a fool."

"Den I got wise now."

"Will you let me have the money?"

"I dell you vot I do."

"What will you do?"

"I meet you to-morrow at seveh o'clock in the morning, and den I vill make a proposition."

"I must leave New York to-night."

"Den I meet you at twelve o'clock to-night."

"That is not early enough. I leave for Philadelphia in the twelve o'clock train."

"How far from Philadelphia must you go den?"

"One hundred and thirteen miles."

"To what place?"

"Why do you ask the question?"

"Because, if I gif you the money, I gif you shust enough to go and come back."

"I am going to a town near Harrisburg."

For some time Scragg appeared to be lost in thought. At length he said:

"Vell, I vill meet you at ten o'clock; dot vill gif you two hours to get off."

A place was named for the meeting, and Bartley Gray left.

After he had gone, Scragg remained silent for some time, when, at last, addressing his clerk, he said:

"If somepody comes to see me, you may dell dem dot I am gone mit Philadelphia," and turning round, he feebly moved away.

Colin Urquhardt was just leaving his office when he was suddenly confronted by the Gypsy Detective.

This meeting took place on the same evening that Lawyer Gray had held an interview with Aaron Scragg, but some hours later.

"Hello! here you are just in time, as usual," exclaimed Colin.

"Yes, I am just in time," replied the mysterious young man, whose movements were as silent and mysterious as those of a wandering spirit.

"What's up? Anything unusual?"

"Yes."

"I feared so, as I have not seen you for several days."

"No; I have been busy; and I have a job for you to-night."

"A detective job?"

"Exactly."

"I guess that I will give up the law business and get on the force. I am having considerable experience lately."

"Well, you will have a chance for the neatest job you have done yet, to-night."

"Indeed! And what wild chase must I go on now?"

"You must go and rescue Bertie Lander."

"Rescue Bertie Lander! Why, good Heavens! what do you mean?"

"Just what I say, my boy."

"Rescue Bertie Lander!" repeated Colin. "Why, you astound me!"

"Explanations come afterward! it is enough for you to know that she has been abducted, and that I have discovered her abductors, and to-night I will put you upon their trail!"

"And what are you going to do in the meantime?"

"Something that will make all concerned open their eyes. I have run Bartley Gray to earth! The game is mine! And now all that remains to do is add up the score."

"You are a wonderful man, Tremaine."

"No time for compliments. You will have to stand on your nerve, to-night, it is a desperate mission on which you go! Are you prepared to take heavy chances?"

"You know me well enough to know that I would walk through fire to gain the end you propose."

"All right! I will give you your points; the part of the hero is assigned to you to-night; be sure that you play it well."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

"So that villain took such an ingenuous method for securing that young lady, eh?" said Colin Urquhardt.

"Yes, and it was a singular chance that led to her discovery by that ruffian."

"It certainly was; but now, what is the work laid out for me?"

"To-night the man who stole Bertie Lander is to lead old Scragg to the place where she is concealed."

"Oh, I see; and I am to personate old Scragg?"

"No; you are to follow them, and when you find out where she is, why, it remains for you to rescue her."

"But suppose there are two or three against me?"

"Are you frightened already?"

"No; but I am but a man, and for her sake I do not wish to take any chances."

"Your precaution is well taken. I have prepared for that; there will be help near you—even Scragg may be on your side."

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed Colin, with a significant wink. "You are going to play old Scragg."

"May be so: but you must act up to the last moment as though you were playing this hand alone; there are reasons why you should not understand any more of my arrangements than I have already imparted."

When the ruffian who had captured Bertie Lander got away some distance from the shore, upon the night of her abduction, as described, he unbound the handkerchief which served as a gag, and said:

"Now, then, Miss Lander, the worst part of it is over; and if you will only sit quietly where you are, I will soon have you comfortably landed, and all will be right. I mean you no harm."

"Where are you taking me to?" asked Bertie, in a remarkably firm tone of voice, considering the peril which she knew encompassed her.

"Oh! you see I dropped to your secret; and I am going to restore you to your friends."

"You are taking me from the only friend I have in the world."

"And who is that?"

"My mother, who will die when she returns and finds me gone. Oh! man, man," she added, piteously, "forbear in this wickedness, and return me to shore, or you will have murder on your soul!"

"Not quite as bad as that. I tell you that you are taking this too much to heart. Now, be reasonable; if some old fool is in love with you, take the advice of a man's experience, and play him—play him all out, in the end, if you choose; but don't let a good chance slip. Now, see, ain't I advising you like a friend, for your own good?"

The only answer the ruffian received to this, was, to behold the desperate girl suddenly rise to her feet and make one dash to precipitate herself overboard into the dark waters.

Fortunately the man caught her in his arms before she succeeded in her desperate attempt; but in order to do so he was compelled to let go of the helm, and the consequence was that the boat gave a lurch, and was almost capsized.

"By Jove! miss, if you try that again I shall have to tie you to the mast," exclaimed the ruffian, with a furious oath.

"You shall never deliver me alive into the hands of Bartley Gray," screamed Bertie, as she struggled with the man.

"And you shall not upset this boat," cried the brute, as he dealt her a powerful blow.

"There," he added, as the girl moaned with pain, "you compelled me to do that. I told you that no harm should come to you if you would be quiet; but I'll be hanged if I am going to let you drown us both!"

Poor Bertie was badly hurt by the scoundrel's rough blow, and with a heart stunned to apathetic indifference, she remained quietly in the bottom of the boat, without making any further attempt to escape, even by the gate of death.

The robber was a skillful boatman, and when daylight dawned he was sailing smoothly by Carnarsie Bay.

At a point where a creek ran inland, he ran his little craft ashore.

It was a lonely point, but one house being visible in either direction.

"Now, then, my pretty one," he remarked, as he assisted his prisoner ashore, "if you will remain perfectly docile, all will be well with you."

The one house alluded to was situated upon a rising knoll of ground on the verge of a great salt meadow, and toward this small cabin the abductor wended his way with his prize.

No one appeared to be stirring about the cabin, and Bertie's abductor was compelled to rap several times before he got an answer to his summons.

At length the cabin-door opened, and the head and face of a great burly negro was protruded.

"Who's dar, and what you want, comin' around a feller's house at this time o' day?"

"Get out here, you black rascal, or I'll bore you!" exclaimed the robber.

"Oh, Master Tom, am dat you?" cried the negro.

"Yes; and I want you to stir yourself!"

"Oh, I'se all right; cum in, Massa Tom; get de folks all up in a few minetts; got company, I see!"

Half an hour later some refreshment was brought to Bertie, in the narrow inner room in which her captor had placed her.

The girl could eat nothing, and when Tom entered a quarter of an hour later, he found the food untasted where it had been laid.

"So you won't eat, eh?"

Bertie made no reply, when Tom continued:

"I'm going to the city, and if there is any friend of yours who will come down five thousand, I will give your friend a chance first to buy you off!"

"Do your worst, scoundrel! I have no friend who has money to pay to a villain like you; but I have a friend who will make you pay dearly for this outrage upon me!"

"All right, miss; but as long as I get the other pay first, I won't mind much; and now listen to me; I hold the nigger's life in my hands, and I have told him that if you try to escape before I return, to cut your throat—and he will do it! I am not fooling, so you will just drop to what I say!" and without another word the ruffian left her, while Bertie dropped upon a chair and wept.

## CHAPTER XXX.

Upon the evening of the same day that the ruffian Tom had left Bertie Lander, and had afterward held his remarkable interview with the seeming old woman in Aaron Scragg's shop, he might have been seen standing in front of a bar in one of the numerous saloons in the vicinity of Fulton Ferry.

As our readers will remember, upon the same day as above, the Gypsy Detective had held an interview with the young lawyer, Colin Urquhardt, when it was arranged between them that the lawyer should undertake a certain perilous enterprise, having in view the recovery of Bertie Lander from the possession of her rude captors.

The man Tom appeared to be on intimate terms with the bar-keeper of the saloon, who was about as villainous-looking a rascal as himself.

As the burglar tossed off his whisky, he remarked:

"If I get through with a little job I have on hand, Sandy, I will flip up on New York for a spell."

"Where will you swing to, Tom?"

"Well, I guess I'll take California in for a while."

"You're wrong, chum," said the bar-keeper, with a knowing look upon his ugly face.

"You wouldn't say so, Sandy, if you knew the lay of things."

"Oh, I guess I can drop to the lay—and you're wrong, I tell yer."

"Then yer haven't dropped to the lay."

"Well, it don't matter much what the snap is—I tell yer that ye're safer in New York than anywhere else. Why, chummie, if a man has got the stamps he can pull through anything in this city."

"That may be so, unless he gets a piper laying around for him with a private grudge in his conk."

"Yer haven't run afoul of a cop, have yer?"

"I've just found out that I'm spoiling a lay-out of one of the nobbiest detectives in New York."

"Which one?"

"That black-muzzled chap they call the Gypsy."

The bar-keeper rolled his blear eyes around thoughtfully for a moment, and then remarked, in a soliloquizing tone:

"He's bad."

"The worst man to start on a pull in New York since some of the old hands have died off or left the force."

"How did yer happen to run agin him?"

"Well, I just dropped upon a gal in whom he is interested."

"A town gal?"

"Not any; a country gal, I guess."

"Well, how did you come to run afoul of her."

"Well, I'll tell yer. This gal is as purty as a picter; a neat little thing, with one of those angel faces I used to dream about when I was a chicken; and I guess that some old chap has gone sweet on the gal, and had her abducted."

"Well, that ain't a new deal around New York."

"Not exactly; but it appears that this Gypsy is pulling against the old feller."

"Oh, I see—that's the lay!"

"Just so."

"And you have had a hand in abducting the pretty angel?"

"Well, I just found her laying around loose, and I picked her up."

"And you're going to make the old fellow come down?"

"I'm to get five thousand dollars for her to-night."

"Have you got her high and dry?"

"Clean out of water."

"Then what do you care for the Gypsy? How will he know that you had a hand in the game?"

"Well, they say that this chap has a knack of finding out things that no one else can."

"Why, I've heard that he was not much more than a boy."

"And I've heard that he is in league with the devil himself. Old Scragg says so."

"He's a keener."

"Who?"

"Old Scragg."

"You bet. I'm waiting for the old hooked-nose now."

"Is he in the rig?"

"He's the man to pay the money."

"I wouldn't trust him out of sight. What! he pay five thousand dollars? He'd give you away, body and soul, for five hundred."

"Oh, I know him well enough, and I'm bound to have the rags before he gets the gal."

"But he'll outcut you somehow."

"Then he'll have to 'cash in.'"

While this conversation was going on an old man, who resembled Scragg, and yet about whose appearance there was something lacking which distinguished the Jew, came into the bar-room.

"Look out, Tom," whispered the bar-keeper, "there's a job been put up on you. That man is only a make-up for the Jew."

"I've dropped," replied Tom, in a quick, low whisper in reply.

The man who bore such a striking resemblance to Scragg, but who really betrayed that he was not the Jew, stepped up to the bar, and without ever looking at the two men in the saloon, called for a glass of beer.

As the bar-keeper waited upon the evidently disguised stranger, Tom stepped beside him, and said, abruptly:

"Hello, old man! I guess that I have seen you before."

"Me!" exclaimed the old man in surprise. "Oh, no, mine friendt, you vos mistaken; you never saw me before."

"But see here, you look very much like a friend of mine."

"By jeminitti! dot vos strange dot a queer-lookin' old man as I vos should look like some udder mans."

"What's your name?"

"Vell, mine friendt, dot vos all right dot you ask, but dot vos not your pizness."

"If you will tell me your name, I will stand treat."

Turning round so as not to be seen by the bar-keeper, the old man winked significantly, at the same time nodding toward the bar-keeper, and said:

"I don't trink more den vonce, mine friendt; some udder time I trinks mit you."

A curious look broke over Tom's face, as he came closer to the old man, and said:

"Well played, old man; but I've dropped."

A still more significant look came over the old man's face as he again winked toward the bar-keeper, and said, in a low voice:

"You must not know me;" and then raising his voice, he added: "Vell, I guess dot I go oudt, der vos no use dot I stay here ven you makes fun mit me."

The burglar now winked back significantly to the old man, and said:

"Come, there's no harm. Tell me what your name is. I may have a watch to send up the spout."

"Oh, vell, den my name vos Jones, und I keeps near Pearl street. You can come up dare if yer wants pizness mit me," and as the old man spoke, he moved toward the door.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

"Hold on, Mr. Jones, have one drink before you go."

"No, mine friendt, I tole you dot I only trink vonce; ven I shpeak, den I means vot I say!"

The burglar drew nearer to the old man, who

had approached the door, and said, in a low voice:

"What's the racket, Scragg?"

"Hush!" said the old Jew with a warning look. "I vould not be known mit five hundredt tollar!"

"That's all right; nobody has dropped to you."

"Don't gif me avay to Sandy."

"No, of course not; what's the lay-out?"

"Meet me on the Brooklyn side in about half an hour; you will findt a coach near Front Street dot vill take us down quick."

"But say, what did you want to come under 'cover' for?"

"I don't drust you; I drusts nopody; dot vos vhy!"

"Why, I'm the only man that stands a chance to get beat."

"No, dot vos not so; maype you put up a liddle shob dot I comes around mit five tousand tollar, hey? Den yon have tings shust like dot you vant dem! No, no, Tom! I vos too smart; you can't blay me dot vay."

"Why, you old fool, you're too smart!"

"Vell, dot vos petter den dot I vas not smart enough, heh?"

"Front Street, on the Brooklyn side, in half an hour; is that the racket?"

"Dot vos shust right; and look here, Tom, you must come alone. You can't pring no pal, dot you und him shust 'kroke' me for de money; no sir-ee!"

"All right, you old pickle; you play square, and you will find me all right and sound!"

"Dot vos all!" said the Jew; "but mind, don't gif me avay to the barkeep; dot vould pe wrong. Good-night. I meet you half an hour, Brooklyn side."

The Jew took his departure, and the moment he was without the door, Tom proved his honesty by turning to the bar-tender with a laugh and saying:

"Well, Sandy, you didn't drop, did you?"

"I'll be hanged if I did!"

"That was old Scragg himself."

"You don't tell me so!"

"Just as sure as you're standing behind that bar at this minute!"

"Then the old loon has got himself up."

"Tried to!"

"Did he think that his rig was a blind?"

"He thinks so now! Ha! ha! ha!"

And "ha! ha! ha!" laughed the barkeeper, as he asked:

"What was he up to?"

"Well, you see, he is smart in one respect. He trusts nobody, you know, and he didn't want to be recognized; but a mule could see through *that disguise!*" (Let the reader recollect this conversation).

"See through it!" exclaimed the bar-tender, with another laugh; "only with half an eye!"

While the above conversation was transpiring between the parties as recorded, a young man might have been seen pacing impatiently up and down within the Fulton ferry inclosure.

Full fifteen minutes passed, when the same old man who had entered the bar-room, and had talked with the burglar, Tom, passed through the ferry entrance and approached the young man mentioned.

The latter eyed the old man curiously, and then approached as though he expected a recognition; but instead, the old fellow passed along as though about to go upon the boat that was just entering the slip.

The young man followed with a surprised look upon his face.

When far down upon the bridge, and amidst the crowd coming off of the boat, the old man stopped a moment and passed a sign to the younger man, and then passed on to the boat.

The young man quickly joined the strangely acting old fellow, when the latter said:

"Everything works all right!"

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Colin Urquhardt, who was the younger of the two men described. "Is this you, Ph——?"

"Hush! not a word! Every plank of this bridge may hold a listener!"

"Are you to play Scragg?"

A quiet laugh preceded the response.

"I have played it, by playing *that I was not Scragg.*"

"What am I to do?" asked Colin.

"You are to go to Brooklyn, you will find a coach there waiting at the corner of Front Street; you must act as driver, and until you are called upon for help, or hear a scuffle, you must act just as though you were naught else but the driver."

"Who has charge of the coach?"

"A man who will give you his hat and a heavy overcoat, to disguise yourself, the moment you hand him this card."

"What am I to do after I am transformed into a coachee?"

"Remain on your box until your passengers arrive."

"How shall I know them?"

"One of them will be old Scragg."

"In other words Ph——"

"Hush! not a word, I told you!"

"After I get my passengers, what shall I do?"

"Exactly as they tell you; you will be at their service, and must know no more than what would naturally pertain to your position as a driver of a coach."

The whistle sounded to start the boat, when the old man said:

"I must go now; and, remember. I have entrusted a perilous task to you. Keep your eye peeled; there may be some blood-letting before morning."

"Will I be doing anything unlawful?"

"You will not; but you must be guided implicitly by old Scragg, nor must you question his orders; if he says about, do so, and you will be doing right; and do not be surprised at any denouement that possible circumstances may precipitate."

"Why all this mystery?"

"We are dealing with desperate men, to whom human life is held as naught when opposed to their designs; we must be prepared for surprises and treachery at every turn. I have reasons for sending you to rescue Miss Lander; some day, if all goes well, I will explain them."

Without another word the old man glided away.

"That man fills me with awe when I am in his presence," muttered Colin, as he passed toward the forward part of the boat; "to me he is a great mystery—the greatest mystery I ever encountered."

Thinking over his strange interview, when the boat landed on the Brooklyn side, the young lawyer proceeded in search of the coach, upon which he was to act as driver.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

THE young lawyer found the coach at the point named, and in a few minutes was transformed into a regular-appearing coachman, with heavy coat and slouched hat.

For fully forty-five minutes he waited, but saw no signs of his expected passengers.

"By George! but there is some deep game being played!" he at length murmured, as he toyed with the whip. "Well, well," he continued, after a moment's thought, "I am in for it; and I am bound to see it through. I believe that I would drive team and coach right into the river if that humdrum, ubiquitous, and mysterious Gypsy Detective told me to. By goodness! what a lawyer that man would make if he had been enough up to study law."

At this moment the cogitations of our young legal friend were interrupted by hearing a voice ask:

"Ish dis de stage for Carnarsie?"

Colin was unprepared for this salutation, and replied innocently:

"No."

"Oh, dot vos pad! I tought dot it vos."

Instantly the young lawyer who had been lost in deep thought, recovered himself, and answered:

"Ah, I understand! This stage is going wherever my passengers wish."

"Vell, I guess dot ve vill go down mit Carnarsie, and take a swim, eh, Tom?—vot do you say?"

"Who's yer driver, Scragg?"

"Vell, dot vos a question dot I can't tell. I know de boss vere I hired de coach. I don't make acquaintance mit drivers, dey vos common fellers dot vos always lookin' for quarters."

"You're a mean old skunk, Scragg!" exclaimed Tom.

"Look here, Tom, you begin dot vay, und I guess dot I von't go down und have a swim tonight."

"Oh, yes, you will! You ain't going to fool me at the last moment. You try to come any gum games, and I will throttle the life out of you."

"Oh, my gootness gracious! vot a violent man you vos, Tom, you make a feller feel like dot he was cold all over! don't talk dot vay, you know dot ve have a liddle business to gedder."

"Well, then, jump into the coach, and we will be off."

"Don't pe in so great a hurry, Tom; my gootness! but you was awful!"

"We're losing time; you're up to some trick, Scragg. Now, look here, it's go or back down. Now, how will you have it? You get this gal, or I give her to the Gypsy Detective—I understand that he is looking for her."

"Oh, mine gootness, Tom, dot vos enough—don't say any more, my goot feller, I'll go any blace mit yer!"

"Have you got the stamps?"

"I neffer make fun, Tom," said Scragg, and he got into the coach.

After the old man had got in, Tom closed the door of the coach, and said:

"I'm going to ride a bit with the driver, Scragg. I don't mean to be played for a sucker."

"Oh, you know dot feller on top?" replied the old man, with an air of perfect innocence, as he settled himself comfortably back on the seat.

"Well, I'm going to find out whether I know him or not. I tell you one thing, Scraggy, old man, I'm keepin' one eye peeled all the time, and if you mean treachery you're goin' to get the worst of it."

"Oh, you vos such a queer feller, Tom; but go ahedt, you can find oudt all you want. I shall shust go to shleep mit mineself. You can shust vake me up ven you come mid de house vere de gal is."

Tom, the burglar, leaped upon the driver's seat, alongside of Colin Urquhardt, saying in a rough tone·

"We will go by way of East New York, Bub."

"All right, boss," replied Colin, in a rough voice, having dropped to about what was required of him.

"Where did this carriage come from?" asked Tom, suddenly, after about fifteen minutes silence, during which, having driven at a rapid rate, they had proceeded as far as Cumberland street.

"From Bleecker street, boss," replied Colin, in as broad and perfect a Scotch dialect as was ever heard.

"What part of Bleecker street?" asked Tom.

"Did I say Bleecker Street?" exclaimed Colin. "Well, I dinna mean so, it is from Thompson Street near Bleecker, that I come."

Colin had taken the precaution to ask the very question of the original driver.

It was fortunate, as it proved, that he had done so.

"Who hired this coach?"

"That I dinna can tell."

"How long have you been in this country?"

"Mony a month, sir."

"How many months!"

"Full sax."

"Oh; and how long have you driven for the proprietors of this coach?"

"Ever sence I be drivin' coach at all sence I've been here."

"Well, look here, my fine fellow!" suddenly exclaimed Tom, as he shoved the muzzle of a cocked pistol right under Colin's nose. "Do you see that?"

"I need hev to be vera near-sighted if I didn't."

"Well, if you attempt to become a party to any treachery that may be played on me, I'll blow off the top of your Scotch head!"

"I be told only to drive this coach, an' I'll drive it where I'm told, if you should stick a hundred pistols under my nose."

"All right; do you know the road to East New York?"

"I do."

"Well, stop a moment at the Howard House, when you get there."

"There be no harm in that, I reckon, an' I'll do as you bid, savin' I get no ither orders frae the inside."

In forty-five minutes after the above conversation, the coach was halted in front of the Howard House.

Tom immediately alighted, and entered the bar-room of the hotel.

While he was gone, the old man in the coach protruded his head from the window of the carriage, away from the hotel, and said, in a guarded tone of voice:

"Have your barker ready—that scoundrel may mean mischief."

In less than three minutes Tom returned, and standing beside the coach, said:

"Look here, Scragg, we had better leave the coach here, and foot it the rest of the way."

"But mine friendt! My gootness, gra-a-cious! you vos crazy."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean dot you vos crazy; dot you tink an old man like I vos, could valk two or three miles."

"But we can't run the coach over the creek and then through the swamp."

"Vell, dot vos so, but ve can drive down vere the swamp vos."

"I'll agree to that, but you must go to the house with me alone."

"If dot vos de bargain, den it vos all right."

"Hang the bargain! You ain't going to have any chance to play me."

"Und dot vos how I feel mit you, Tom, my tear poy; but I shust tell you vot I do—ven we come mit de swamp, den I vos satisfied, undt den I goes mit you alone."

Tom gave the driver the directions, and after half an hour's ride, he reached out of the window and told the coachman to halt.

A moment later Scragg and his conductor were following a path which led through the swamp.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

FOR some distance Tom and old Scragg plodded along in silence. At length the former said:

"There is one thing, old hoss—you must be satisfied by this time that I mean to act on the square, and I want you to do the same thing."

"How vos dot? I vos satisfied, my tear poy."

"Well, you have got five thousand dollars in your clothes, haven't you?"

"Vell, to make goot mine pargain, I 'spose dot I ought to have," said old Scragg, after a moment, in a hesitating manner.

"Well, now, what is to prevent me from taking you by the throat, and after shaking the life out of you, snap the money and chuck your old carcass into the creek?"

"Oh, mine gootness gra-a-cious, Tom! You shust go again and make a feller feel like he vos cold all over!"

"Oh, you old skunk! I have no notion of doing so, only I want to prove what an honest man I am, and how I keep my word."

"By Jiminitti! Tom, vot a feller you vos to make liddle jokes! You vould make your fortune if you vent on der stage in der Bowery!"

At this moment the faint twinkle of a light became visible across the meadow, its faint glimmer indicating that they were approaching some kind of a habitation.

"Do you see that light over there across the meadow, Scragg?" said Tom.

"Vell, I see somedings, but you know dot I vos old, and dot mine eyes ver weak."

"Can you see it now!"

"Ya-a-s! I tink dot I see vun liddle glimmer."

"Well, in that cabin we will find the gal."

"Dot vos goot, Tom! Den ven I gets de gal, I vill write oued for you a recommendation as an honest mans! I vill make him goot dot it vould keep you oud from de penitentiary for burglary and udder liddle tings dot you might get into."

This unique idea made Tom laugh, and he was still laughing, when suddenly the shadow of a man flitted across the ray of light which shone from the window of the cabin toward which they had approached.

"By Jiminitti! vot vos dot?" exclaimed Scragg, coming to a halt.

"What was what?" asked Tom.

"Look here, Tom—dot vos de shadow of a man dot I shust saw cut across dere. Vot does dot mean! You said dot you vos honest, and vould deal square."

"I did not see anything," replied the burglar.

"Dot vos a lie, Tom—you vos looking right straight in dot direction."

"Well, may be it was the nigger that lives in the cabin where the girl is a prisoner."

"Vell, mebbe it vos; petter as we found oud before we go on, den."

"Well, just to please you, you old curmudgeon, I will call."

"Here, Scip! here, Scip!" called Tom.

There was no reply.

"Eh? dot vos strange!" soliloquized the Jew, aloud.

"Oh, come along! It was the nigger, Scip, and he has gone on to the house."

"Vell, den, call him oud, den ve vos sure."

Tom drew a pistol, and leveling it at Scragg's head, said.

"I ain't going to stand any fooling with you! You can come, and give the money, and take the gal, or I will blow your brains out, and take the money, and sell the gal to the Gypsy."

"Dot is not vot you agreedt wid me, Tom, and it vos more like a shentlemans dot you put down your pistol, and not try to frighten an oldt man. If you shoot me, Tom, you will lose de recommendation dot I promised you, my tear poy."

"Then come right along, old man, and don't be fooling away time. I've got the gal, and you have got the money. Now, then, I want to make an exchange as was agreed upon, and then you may go to the devil if you want to!"

"I will shust die where I standt, before I go one step further, unless you found oud who owns dot shadow dot we shust saw."

"Scip! Scip!" cried Tom, in a loud voice.

"Am dat you, Tom?" came a voice.

"Yes, that's me."

"Golly! boss, I didn't know who was comin' across de medder at dis time of night."

"Now, are you satisfied, old man."

"Ya—a—s, dot vos all right. Now we go on; but mindt, Tom, I haf shust one eye open all de time, sure."

A few moments' walk brought them to the rude cabin.

We will not attempt to describe the interior, as there are but few of our young readers who have not at some time in their lives been inside of one.

Tom entered first, followed by the negro.

The old man entered last, and before passing fairly within the door, he turned and glanced back.

As he did so, his eye fell upon the faint outline of a man dodging across the meadow some hundred yards back.

But one glance the old man gave at this moving figure, and then he followed into the house.

"Sit down, old man," said Tom, pointing to a stool, and at the same moment he crossed the room and closed the rude door.

Returning to a seat opposite his companion, Tom said:

"Now, here; fork over the money."

"Dot vos all right, Tom, but vere vos de gal?"

"Hand over the money and she'll be placed in your possession."

"Dot vos not de pargain, Tom. I vos to pay de money ven I gots de gal."

"Look here, I expected this!" exclaimed the burglar, fiercely, "and I am prepared. I give you just three minutes to pass over the stamps!"

"I can't pay no stamps, Tom, until I get de gal."

Tom drew his pistol, and deliberately cocked it, at the same time telling the negro to get an ax, and stand ready.

The old Jew remained perfectly still, but his eyes were kept steadily fastened on both of the two threatening scoundrels in front of him.

"Will you hand over that money?" asked Tom, in a fierce, husky voice.

"I must see de gal first."

"If you see her will you hand over the money?"

"If I found oud dat tings was all right, Tom."

"Well, you shall see her, but I will not stand any more fooling, that I'll swear! Scip, just show up that gal, will you?"

"All right, boss," answered the negro, and he disappeared into the adjoining room.

In a moment the negro reappeared, holding Bertie Lander firmly clasped in his strong arms.

"There's the gal, old man," exclaimed Tom; "and now hand over the cash and take her."

"Dot vos de gal I vos come for?" asked the old man, coolly.

"Yes; that is the girl that you have come for, so now fork over!"

The old man fumbled a moment in his pocket, and then suddenly drawing a pair of cocked pistols, exclaimed:

"I'm very sorry for you, Tom, I forgot to bring the money, but I must have the girl!"

"By all the fiends of hell!" yelled Tom, "I'm sold, eh?"

"Yes, old man, you're sold. And now drop your barker!"

"Not until I send a ball through your body, whoever you are?"

Tom's hand was upon the trigger, when the door opened and another revolver was leveled at his head, and a firm voice exclaimed:

"Look out, mister, don't shoot, if you value your miserable life!"

## CHAPTER XXXIV

"TREACHERY!" yelled Tom, and he sprung to his feet, but in an instant the seeming old man leaped across the room, and flung out his foot.

Tom fell to the ground as though he had been struck by a club.

Seeing Tom go down, the negro rushed into the room, an ax in his hand, but the next instant he received a shot from one of the old man's pistols across the knuckles, which caused him to drop his ax and shriek with pain.

The next instant the stranger who had stood in the door-way leaped into the room, and with the butt of his pistol gave the negro a tap on the head.

By the time Colin Urquhardt turned round to render assistance to the seeming old man, he saw Tom standing upon his feet, with a pair of hand-cuffs on his wrists.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Colin, "you have got him secure, Phil!"

"Yes, I've got him secure enough! and, by the powers! I find that I can just clap on the nippers as handy as I used when I was in the business!"

Colin looked surprised, the voice was an unfamiliar one.

"Who are you, anyhow?" asked Tom, doggedly, addressing the seeming old man.

"And don't you remember me, Tom?" asked the stranger, with a quiet laugh.

"No, I don't; but I'll be hanged if you haven't got the best of me, and I'm no chicken."

"Well, Tom, I left the business a few years ago, but I piped you once before this."

"The h—l you did!" ejaculated Tom.

"Oh, yes, my man! And I thought that I had got out of the business for good, but being in New York, I thought I would take a hand at the old business, just to help a friend."

"And who was that friend?" asked Colin, who had secured possession of Bertie, and had assured her that she was rescued and safe.

"That friend," replied the gallant stranger, who had played his part so well, "was Philip Tremaine—the Gypsy Detective!"

"And who, under Heaven, are you?" asked Colin, excitedly.

"Well, I am *Fergus Connors! once known as the Irish Detective, at your service, to do a good turn for a friend any day!*"

"Ah! ha! then you are the man who worked up that famous bond robbery a few years ago?"

"Well, yes, I believe that I was instrumental in recovering Mr. Teale's bonds!"

Some further conversation followed, during which the situation was explained to Bertie.

Finally, Colin Urquhardt said:

"Well, Mr. Irish Detective, or rather Mr. Campbell O'Brien, Esq., what are you going to do with your prisoner?"

"My prisoners, you mean!"

"Will you hold this colored man?"

"Well, I guess I will for the present! I reckon that I know Mr. Scipio Brown, and if I am not mistaken, the authorities in New York would be glad to have a little talk with him!"

"This fellow can be convicted for abduction, anyhow."

"Well, I reckon that it will not be necessary to try to convict Mr. Tom; if I am not mistaken, he has a little balance of seven or eight years to serve out, already."

Both of the prisoners were securely handcuffed, and the Irish Detective linked them together, when the whole party started back for the place where the carriage had been left.

Before arriving at the latter place, the Irish Detective, after the manner of his old-style gallantry, said, addressing Miss Lander:

"I am sorry, my dear young lady, that you will be compelled to ride for a mile or two in company with two such precious rascals as I have here; but when we reach East New York, you shall be rid of their company."

"Oh! I am too grateful for my escape to mind any inconvenience now, which will bring me home to my distracted mother!" replied Bertie.

"You shall be clasped in your mother's arms in less than three hours, if no accident happens."

"Oh, I am too thankful to find words to express my gratitude."

"Well, you can save your gratitude for the brave young man to whom it is due—Philip Tremaine. As far as I am concerned, I have just fulfilled his orders to the letter. He it was who worked out your rescue."

As the coach was being driven back toward East New York, Tom, the burglar, said:

"This is the first time I slipped into a net so easy like."

"Well, Tom, my man, the chances are always against a person who breaks the laws."

"Was it you that played off on me for Scragg in the saloon by the ferry?"

"No; it was not me."

"Then Scragg betrayed me, after all, the hound."

"No; give the devil his due. Scragg did not give you away. It was the Gypsy Detective that played off Scragg on you in the saloon."

"The h—l! Then he was the Mr. Jones?"

"Yes."

"I give it up; *he's a deep one;* but both of you were too smart for me. May I ask you one question?" added Tom.

"Yes," replied the Irish Detective.

"Why didn't the Gypsy Detective work this thing out on his own hook?"

"He had another job on hand, and he thought I might run out the pipe, as the channel was already dug."

Nothing further was said until they reached East New York.

Arriving at the latter place, the Irish Detective dismounted with his two prisoners, and took a late car from the Howard House to the ferry.

Before parting, the detective told Colin that he would be at his office in the morning.

After the departure of the Irish Detective, Colin told Bertie that he would drive her straight to Bay Ridge.

Between one and two o'clock that same night, Bertie, as promised, was placed in her mother's arms, while our improvised coachman, the young lawyer, whipped up his horses and drove back to New York, rejecting all requests to remain until morning.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

WHILE the scenes above related were transpiring, and upon the same night when Fergus Connors, the Irish Detective, so singularly appeared, another exciting series of incidents were happening at nearly the same hour.

Ten o'clock was the honr named when Bartley Gray, the lawyer, was to meet Aaron Scragg, and receive a certain amount of money to enable him to go to some remote part of Pennsylvania, and complete a contemplated scheme of villainy.

At twenty minutes past nine o'clock the lawyer might have been seen wending his way along Courtlandt Street, toward the Jersey ferry.

The villain was disguised, wearing an old coat, and having his scheming brain covered by a slouched hat.

It chanced that there were but few pedestrians moving along the street, and as Bartley Gray proceeded, he occasionally gave audible utterance to his thoughts.

"If I can get that poor fellow to sign a contract with me, and have him concealed in this city for a few days, until the regular transfers of property are duly made and recorded, I can bid defiance to that infernal Gypsy Detective, and fly to parts unknown.

"As far as old Scragg is concerned," he continued, after a moment, "I will just 'bilk' him out of every cent.

"Plague on his scheming old brain, if it had not been for him I would not have got mixed up in that infernal express office robbery! and if I was clear of that, I think I could send the Gypsy 'kiting!'

"I am now satisfied of that fellow's identity," again the lawyer resumed, after a pause; "and if I was clear, I could hunt him down and cage him."

By this time, Gray had reached West street, and as he waited for a car to pass before crossing, a dark face was pressed against the glass door of a neighboring saloon, and a pair of keen, sharp eyes were fastened upon him

Two minutes after the lawyer had passed through the toll-way, an old man, with gray hair and beard, and spectacles over his eyes, passed through also.

Back and forth within the ferry inclosure paced the lawyer, waiting for Scragg; while the old man described sat at the window of the sitting-room, apparently reading, but really watching closely the former's movements.

In and out went the boats, and still Gray kept up his restless walk, until, just as the hand of the clock denoted ten, with a muttered exclamation of delight he stopped his walk, as old Scragg came shuffling through the toll-way toward him.

"Ah! you have come?" said the lawyer.

"Yes, Mister Gray; I vas come shust on time!"

"Well, I owe you one!"

"Yes, Mister Gray, you owe me one good, large sum!"

"Well, you shall have all your money in a short time, you old fool!"

"Dot vos all right to shpeak, but dot vos not mine money!"

"Why, have you only come down here to squeal over what I owe you?"

Scragg laid his hand upon the lawyer's arm, and was evidently about to whisper something, but just at that moment, a policeman in full uniform brushed against him, and catching his eyes as he turned, gave the Jew a significant look.

"Where are you going, Mister Gray?"

"What difference does that make to you!"

"Vell, you know dot you vant some money?"

"Yes; I do want some money, and you must give it to me!"

"What train do you take?"

"What do you want to know for? You have no idea of taking the same train, have you?"

"No; but I vould like to know which vay mine money goes, as I do not expect dot I vill see him again."

"You're a suspicious old cuss."

"Vell, dot vos petter dot I pe! My gootness gra-a-cious, it vos better dot I vos sooner!"

The policeman again nudged the old man, and looked keenly into his face.

"I wonder what that cop is mousing around for?" said Gray, suddenly.

"Dot vos more as I could tell, Mister Gray. Mebbe he vos lookin' for you!"

"Hang him; I wish he would move away!"

"Vell, neffer mind dot hofficer; shust tell me vot train you dakes, und I vill give you de money, but neffer once more!"

"I shall take the owl train for Philadelphia."

"Den you shtop dere?"

"No; not more than an hour or two."

"Und ven vill you come back mit Ni-York?"

"In two days."

"Und den you vill pay me all mine money?"

"Every cent."

"Vell, den, here is two hundred tollars, und now mindt, if you don't come and pay me effery cent, den I vill gif you avay."

Gray grabbed the roll of bills, and after a few more hurried words, started for the outgoing boat, just as the bell rang.

The lawyer passed over to the gentlemen's side of the boat, while the old man whom we have described as having watched the former's movements, followed him, and entered the ladies' cabin.

When the twelve o'clock train, with the usual shriek and puff, moved out of the depot, Bartley Gray was among the passengers.

The old man, also, by some singular coincidence, was a passenger upon the same train.

On through the night sped the iron horse, over its iron track, and a strange fate was hanging over at least one of its passengers.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN a remote country, back among the mountains of Pennsylvania, stands a remarkable-looking building.

The central portion of this strange mansion looks like a comfortable dwelling; but upon either side are two wings with iron-girded windows, bearing in every respect a close resemblance to a prison.

A similar building, though much larger, and one story higher, extends from the rear.

One glance would lead a casual observer to conclude that it was really a prison.

To a certain extent, this conclusion would prove correct.

It was a prison, but not one that contained prisoners sentenced for criminal practices.

It was a private mad-house, and its restrained inmates were *supposed* to be—insane.

In the forenoon, two days subsequent to the time when our readers witnessed the departure of Bartley Gray from New York, with a mysterious human shadow upon the same train, a scene occurred in the building which we have described, that has an important bearing upon the incidents of our story.

Within a room, walled in by solid blocks of granite, chained by both hands and feet to an iron ring riveted to the floor, was a man whose appearance would denote him to be about fifty years of age.

He was a handsome man, with regular features, iron-gray hair, and long beard, silver white.

This fine-looking person was chained to the floor, as though he were dangerous; yet there was nothing in the expression upon his handsome face that would warrant such a conclusion.

Although chained by both hands and feet, the jailer who had thus bound this man had given sufficient iron-tether, so that he could move some three or four feet in any direction from the ring in the stone floor to which he was bound.

At the time we find this remarkable-looking individual, he was seated upon a stool, and was deeply interested in the pages of a book which he was perusing.

Certainly a strange occupation for a man whom it was necessary to chain by the hands and the feet to the floor of his stone-walled room.

Presently the door of his room opened, and a mild-faced old man, resembling either a doctor or a chaplain, entered the room.

"Good-morning, Mr. Randall," said the newcomer, addressing the chained man.

The prisoner merely raised his head and nodded.

"Are you feeling well this morning?" asked the doctor, in a bland and kindly tone of voice.

"No, sir; nor have I felt well for the fourteen years that I have been held bound a prisoner between these walls!"

"Dear me, how persistent you are in considering yourself a prisoner!"

A bitter laugh fell from the lips of Mr. Randall, as he said:

"It is not more strange than that, for fourteen years, you have dared daily to taunt me thus."

"You ought to be perfectly happy here; you have plenty of books to read, good food to eat, and every comfort save your liberty."

"Yes, and I would willingly surrender all the former for just twenty-four hours of the latter."

"Yes, and in that twenty-four hours, urged on by your insane fancies, you would bring mourning into many a household, I fear me."

"And is there not mourning in my household?"

"My dear man, who is there to mourn for you?"

"A wife and daughter."

"Dear me, that is a part of your disease—one of your insane fancies. Why, you never had a wife and child."

"We will not argue this. We have often discussed the same matter."

"But it is so strange that, when almost well, you will still betray the singular fancy which compels me to pronounce you insane."

"You can pronounce me what you choose. I am still hopeful that my day of deliverance will come; and when that day dawns, it will be followed by the night of retribution."

"Oh, you horrible man! you make me shudder. Yours is the most dangerous type of the malady that has ever come under my treatment."

The conversation between the doctor and the so-called maniac was brought to a close, at this moment, by one of the assistants coming to the room, and announcing that there was a visitor below, who was anxious to see the doctor immediately.

Upon returning to his reception parlor, the doctor met a man well known to our readers.

It was Bartley Gray, the lawyer.

"Ah, Mr. Gray!" exclaimed the doctor, "your visit is remarkably opportune in many ways. I have just come from the cell of our patient."

"Indeed! and how is he?"

"To-day as he was the morning after you brought him here fourteen years ago."

"Indeed!"

"I speak truly."

"You say that my visit is opportune. Will you explain how?"

"I was just about to write to you."

"And now that I am here, you may give me a verbal statement of what you wish to say."

"It may not be necessary. Have you brought me money?"

"I have not."

"Then I will state that my letter would have informed you that unless money was speedily forwarded without any further excuses, I should be compelled to release my patient as cured."

"Well, doctor, I am happy to inform you

that I have come here for no other purpose than to *demand the release of your patient!*"

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

"WHAT!" exclaimed the doctor, turning pale, "have you really come to release that man, or do you tell me this so as to gain more time for the payment of what you owe me?"

"I am not a man who can afford to joke, Doctor Haines."

"Then do you really mean to defraud me out of the four years' board which you owe me for that patient?"

"I do not mean to defraud you," replied Gray, coolly. "That is a very harsh mode of putting it."

"But it is worse than defrauding me, and I can not use any other term."

"Then, sir, if those are terms that suit you, you must excuse me if I say that it is you who have attempted to defraud me."

"Defraud you, Bartley Gray! Pray tell how?"

A bland smile played over the lawyer's sallow face, as he replied, with a provoking coolness that was simply sardonic:

"You have defrauded me, Doctor Haines, by pretending that your patient was incurable, for the mere paltry pay that you received for his keep."

"Why, you infernal scoundrel!" exclaimed Dr. Haines, his face becoming purple with rage, "you know that you lie!"

"Your violence does not surprise me, doctor; wicked men like you are always violent when they find themselves discovered."

"Outwitted, you mean," exclaimed the doctor, bitterly; "yes, outwitted—headed off by a greater villain!"

Lawyer Gray bowed, as the doctor continued:

"Then you are determined not to pay me my due?"

"I am determined not to pay you one cent!"

"Then your patient shall not be released."

"Will you risk a summons before the Supreme Court of this State, Doctor Haines?" asked Gray, tauntingly.

"I will risk anything rather than be overmatched by such a villain as you are."

"Very well; if you compel me to go to law, and explore the secrets of this house, I am content."

"You dare not go to law—you are as culpable as I am!"

"Possibly so; but how can you prove it?"

"By your own letters, if nothing else."

"You forget that I am a lawyer."

"Well, suppose you are?"

"Every letter that you hold of mine would only be so much testimony against yourself, and would tend to exculpate me."

"They would?"

"Yes, sir, simply because every one of them is written upon the tenor that you were constantly leading me to believe that your patient was insane, and that I was depending entirely upon your judgment."

"Why, you cunning, devilish rascal!"

"I knew that I was dealing with the latter."

"You are determined not to pay me?"

"No; I am willing to pay you in full, under certain contingencies."

"And what are those contingencies?"

"I must see your patient before I can answer you."

"I do not know but what you might, perforce, only seal your treachery, should I grant you an interview."

"You must grant me an interview; I do not hold out a chance of payment, because I wish to conciliate you."

For full five minutes not a word was exchanged between the two expert scoundrels.

It was diamond cut diamond; and as matters stood, the lawyer was a point or two ahead of the doctor.

At length the doctor said:

"You may see the patient; but let me tell you one thing, that unless you make up your mind to deal fairly with me, I may find a way to get the better of you yet."

Half an hour later Bartley Gray was ushered into the room where the chained man was.

As the lawyer entered the door a terrible look settled upon the handsome face of the prisoner.

"I wish to be alone with your patient," said the lawyer to the assistant-keeper, who had accompanied him to the door.

The assistant withdrew, and Bartley Gray closed the door behind him; not an idea having flashed over his mind that he was walking into a trap, and that door might never open for him to voluntarily walk forth again.

"Well, George, how do you do?" said Gray, addressing the bound prisoner.

"Are you a human being, and dare face me, Bartley Gray?" asked the prisoner, in a husky voice.

"I am a human being, with a due sense of justice animating my heart, and that is why I have come to set you free, George Lander."

"I will not accept freedom at your hands, scoundrel! lest I would forfeit the right of wreaking my vengeance upon you, which some day, sooner or later, I will do."

"You have not heard on what conditions I propose to grant you your freedom."

"Will those conditions leave me the right of vengeance?"

"They will."

"And give me immediate freedom?"

"They will."

"Then I accept them before you name them."

Lawyer Gray produced some papers from his pocket, and handing them to George Lander, said:

"Read those papers, and if you sign them you shall be free."

The prisoner took the papers in his manacled hands, and patiently read them.

We will here briefly explain their contents to our readers.

They contained a complete exculpation of Gray from all complicity in George Lander's illegal confinement; also an agreement to assign, within a given date, certain properties to the said Gray—in fact, they were *bona fide* deeds, which only required to be recorded to make the party named in them absolute owner of certain property.

"You demand a large price," said George Lander, after he had carefully read them all.

"Yes; but remember what you gain, a wife and daughter."

The prisoner fairly screamed:

"Are you telling me truly? Have I a wife and daughter living?"

"You have. Your wife is not less lovely than when you parted from her, and your child is an angel of beauty."

"And yet it is fifteen years since I have seen my wife. I have grown old; silver threads must mingle now with her golden tresses."

"Yet she is a lovely woman."

"I could almost forgive you, Bartley Gray, if I was assured that you were speaking the truth."

Bartley Gray handed George Lander two photographs; the moment the prisoner's eyes fell upon them he wept like a child.

At length he said:

"I can not doubt you; I will sign the papers."

"At once?"

"I will sign them at once; but remember, I am to be free; I know that I am giving half my property, but the balance is mine."

"You shall be free the moment those papers are signed."

"I will sign them at once."

"No, you will not!" said a firm voice, and the Gypsy Detective entered the room.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE imaginations of our readers must picture the expression that rested upon Bartley Gray's countenance, at this startling interruption.

The pencil of the painter might picture it, but the pen of the writer can not describe it.

Once again the baffled villain heard those magical words:

"I am just in time."

"Yes," after an instant shrieked the lawyer. "Just in time to die!" and he drew from his pocket a cocked pistol.

But still again the wonderful and mysterious man, the Gypsy Detective, was "just in time!" Ere Bartley Gray could raise his arm to level his pistol, he heard these words;

"Look out, scoundrel! you're covered!" and the lawyer's glaring eyes gazed upon a derringer aimed directly at his heart.

"Drop that pistol, or die!" came the command.

Bartley Gray's weapon fell from his grasp.

The man was nerveless now, the villain was finally balked.

"Seize him!" came the command again, in the same calm, firm tones.

Two men entered the room, and laid strong hands upon the wretch.

Then Philip Tremaine quietly crossed the room, and clapped a pair of handcuffs upon his wrists.

The lawyer spoke.

"What authority have you for this outrage?" he asked.

"We do not make explanations to midnight robbers and assassins."

"How dare you call me a robber and assassin?"

The Gypsy Detective laughed, and, after a moment, said;

"Bartley Gray, your course of crime is run; the balance of your life will be spent in a prison."

"A convicted forger tells me this!"

"Oh, yes; I am glad that you reminded me!" said the detective. "I have some papers here which your partner in rascality has already signed, and now I want your signature also."

As Philip Tremaine spoke, he produced the same papers that old Scragg had so reluctantly signed in the thieves' rendezvous some months before.

"I'll sign nothing!"

"Oh, yes, you will!"

"I will not. I defy you, you black-faced Gypsy."

Philip Tremaine leaned forward and whispered something in his ear.

Gray's face became deathly white, and his lips quivered, as he said:

"I will sign the papers."

"I thought so!" remarked the detective, with a quiet smile.

Then turning toward the chained man, who had been a silent witness of the whole proceedings, the detective said:

"I hope that I behold George Lander?"

"That is my name, sir!"

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Philip.

"And who, sir, are you?" asked George Lander.

"I am a detective officer from New York."

"And am I to be set free?"

"Just as soon as those irons can be knocked off."

George Lander fainted.

When he came to he was freed from his shackles.

A moment he gazed around wildly, and then muttered, as though he was not certain but that he was dreaming:

"Can it be possible that I am free, or do I dream?"

"You are free—free to return to your wife and child!"

"Then that assassin did not lie to me? I have a wife and child?"

"You have, sir!"

"And these are their pictures?" exclaimed Lander, picking up the photographs that had dropped upon the floor.

"Those are their pictures."

"Then come, let me hasten to them."

"My dear sir, all in good time; your family are in New York; nearly two days journey from here."

"The more reason that we should hasten to them; and then—then—Bartley Gray," he added, with a fierce gesture, "I will seek a settlement with you!"

"Bartley Gray will be out of the way of your vengeance for the next twenty years."

"Never. I will seek him, even within the walls of a prison!"

"Before you go further, Mr. Tremaine," said Bartley Gray, "I wish to inform you, as a lawyer, that a warrant issued in New York is not a legal document in this State."

"A requisition from the governor is, though, sir, and to allay any hopes that you may indulge, I will now inform you that I have proceeded legally in all that I have done."

Within two hours, the Gypsy Detective, with his prisoner and George Lander, the rescued father of our heroine, were on their way to New York.

To make the above incident plain to our readers, we will not have to tell them who the old man was who entered the same train with the lawyer at Jersey City.

They have long since surmised that.

We will, however, explain the reason why no opposition was offered to the release of Mr. Lander, or the arrest of Bartley Gray, on the part of Doctor Haines.

Shortly after the lawyer had been shown into the presence of his victim, the Gypsy Detective

had been ushered into the presence of Doctor Haines.

The officer quickly exhibited his authority, and his papers were so straight that the villain doctor did not dare offer any resistance.

Furthermore, the detective had assured the doctor that if he would aid him, as far as lay in his power, that he would not make it his business to personally hold the doctor responsible for what had occurred.

Too glad to escape so easily for the present, the doctor had assisted our hero as related.

Two days later, the Gypsy Detective was again in New York.

During the journey, he had made certain arrangements with Mr. Lander, which will be explained in the succeeding chapters.

Feeling that he had about finished his labors as far as this case was concerned, our hero, shortly after his arrival in the city, which was about mid-day, made his way to the office of his friend, Colin Urquhardt.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

COLIN URQUHARDT was sitting in his office, when there came a light tap at the door.

"Come in!" called the young lawyer.

The door was pushed open, and a veiled lady entered.

The young lawyer at once rose to his feet, and offered his visitor a chair.

The lady seated herself, and a moment of awkward silence followed, which was finally broken by Colin, saying:

"Madam, I am at your service."

The lady removed her veil, and disclosed the handsome features of that dangerous siren, who had once attempted to induce the young legal gentleman to drink of the poisoned wine.

"Ah! madam! it is you!" ejaculated Colin, uncourteously.

"Yes, sir, it is I!"

"And to what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

"I have come to expose a villain!"

"Indeed, madam!"

"That is my errand here, sir."

"It is a laudable one if you are sincere. May I ask the name of the person?"

"Bartley Gray."

Colin leaped to his feet, and said, excitedly:

"That man certainly is a scoundrel, and deserves to be exposed; but, madam, recollecting what once occurred at your residence, would I be justified in trusting anything that you say? How do I know but you may have come in the interest of that man?"

"I can convince you in a few words that I have not!"

"Then I shall be glad to listen to your story."

"In the first place, let me tell you my motive."

"I am listening!"

"He went back on me; he has robbed and betrayed me! Are these not good motives for giving him away?"

"From your stand-point, madam, probably they are!"

"Well, then, do you know the object I had in asking you to my house?"

"To murder me, madam! You ask the question, I answer plainly."

"And you answer correctly."

"You are frank!"

"I am, but I will be still more so."

"Proceed."

"Bartley Gray wished me to personate another woman."

"I am aware of that."

"I hold letters from him which will convict him of the attempted conspiracy, and those letters are at your service."

"I may have use for them."

"I will act as a witness against him, and I will reveal acts of villainy that will send him to Sing-Sing."

"Do you know anything about the property he is supposed to hold in trust for the person he wished you to personate?"

"I have all the deeds and papers connected with the business, and those I will surrender into your hands."

"But did you come by them in a lawful manner?"

"I did."

"Then you can aid us in bringing that man to justice."

"When you arrest him you may rely upon me to furnish enough evidence, both documentary and verbal, to convict him!"

"It is possible that we may avail ourselves of your offer."

"So far, so good; and now will you tell me who that young lady was who saved your life in my house?"

"That young lady was a man."

"You think so?"

"I know so."

"Then I have *nothing more to say!*" was the singular reply of this remarkable woman, as she arose, and with a magnificent bow, took her leave.

The young lawyer's visitor had been gone but a few moments, when the office door opened and the Gypsy Detective, in his usual quiet manner entered.

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Colin, as he sprung to his feet, and cordially grasped the hand of his mysterious friend, "where did you come from? and where have you been?"

"Which question shall I answer first?" said Philip, with a pleasant smile.

"Both of them."

"Well, I have been in Pennsylvania, and I have just arrived from there."

"I have great good news for you."

"I am glad; let's hear it."

"You recollect that woman who tried to poison me?"

"Yes."

"She has just been here."

"Well?"

"She has turned against Gray, and will furnish evidence on which to send him to State prison."

"Indeed?"

"As true as you are born!"

"You have not told me about Bertie and her mother."

"They are both safe and well; let me tell you about the reserve."

"I have heard the particulars."

"Who from?"

"The friend who took my place while I was running her persecutor to earth."

"Then you were on the track of Bartley Gray?"

"I was."

"Did you catch him?"

"He is in the Tombs."

"Good! now, then, I will write a note right away to that woman."

"What for?"

"Why, with her turned against him, we can send him higher than Haman!"

"We do not want her evidence. I have a case against him that will send him to prison for his natural life. We must not make our romance public."

"You *are* a wonder!"

"Thank you! And now, how about Mrs. Lander and her daughter—where are they?"

"At the same house down at Bay Ridge."

"All right! we will go down there; I have news for them!"

"And good news, indeed!" exclaimed Colin, enthusiastically. "I tell you, the removal of Bartley Gray from their path will be news indeed!"

"I have better news than that!"

"You have recovered their property, I suppose, you cunning, dark, handsome-faced rascal!"

"I have even more *startling news than that!*"

"Goodness gracious! what under Heaven have you got to tell them!"

"That I have recovered their property, and *a husband and a father with it!*"

"Oh, my Heavens!" exclaimed Colin. "Now tell me that the milennium is to come to-morrow, and your budget will be exhausted!"

## CHAPTER XL.

UPON the same evening that Colin Urquhardt and the Gypsy Detective held the conversation above described, Mrs. Lander and her daughter were seated upon the same piazza where we saw them once before.

They were holding an animated conversation.

At the moment we find them, Bertie was speaking—she said:

"Oh, mother! it does seem so strange that we do not see or hear anything of Mr. Tremaine."

"He is a mysterious man, Bertie; and what is more, he follows a profession that frequently compels him to leave at only a moment's notice."

Steps were heard. Both ladies looked toward the road, and the forms of two men were seen approaching the house.

"There comes the detective, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Lander. "We were just speaking about him, and here he comes. You remember the old adage?"

"How can you distinguish him, mamma, in the twilight?"

"There is but one man that I know, Bertie, who has that peculiar walk; it is free and open, yet noiseless."

"Yes, it is he," exclaimed Bertie, as they drew nearer; "and Colin is with him."

A moment later and the friends were exchanging joyful salutations.

After congratulations had been fully exchanged, Mrs. Lander said:

"I am so glad that you have returned, Mr. Tremaine; poor Bertie is afraid of her life to remain here, and yet we did not dare to make a change until we had consulted with you."

"There is no necessity for you to make a change on the score of danger."

"Why not?"

"Because all of your foes are where they will be harmless for some time to come."

"But Bartley Gray is still at large?"

"No; he is not."

"Have you captured him?"

"I have; and, madam, I have done more—yes, more than I expected when I first started out to run this man to earth."

"Oh, you have done nobly, and I fear that we can never pay you."

"I am amply paid already. But, Mrs. Lander, I must see you alone for a few moments."

"You have some bad news for me, with all the good news?" said Mrs. Lander, turning pale.

"You wrong your friend, madam," cried the impetuous Colin. "Philip Tremaine is not a bad news carrier these days."

The Gypsy Detective followed Mrs. Lander into the parlor.

When they were alone, he said:

"Madam, can you bear great news—unexpected news?"

The noble woman clasped her hand to her heaving bosom, and after a moment, gasped:

"Yes, I can guess what you have to tell. Wait one moment, and I can bear to hear it."

"What do you suspect that I have to tell?"

"That Bartley Gray has confessed, and that you know where my poor husband's body is laid."

A moment's silence followed, broken at length by Mrs. Lander, who said:

"I ought to consider this good news."

The Gypsy Detective did not speak, and for once he exhibited strong emotion.

Mrs. Lander observed this, and said:

"Pray tell me, have I not guessed aright?"

"No, madam, you have not. Colin told you that it was good news that I had to impart."

"Oh, merciful Heaven!" shrieked Mrs. Lander, "can it—oh—can it be possible that my husband lives?"

"Your husband lives."

Mrs. Lander fell senseless to the floor.

We must repeat the stereotyped saying that joy never kills.

It did not in Mrs. Lander's case; and when she did recover consciousness, she was more calm than if she had not been thus, for a few moments, stricken down.

The Gypsy Detective, in his quick, nervous manner, related all that had occurred since he had last seen her.

Tears fell from the noble woman's eyes upon hearing of the harsh, cruel treatment her husband had received, but he lived, and was freed, and that was joy sufficient for all past misery.

In the excess of her gratitude, Mrs. Lander threw her arms about the neck of the Gypsy Detective, and kissed him on both cheeks.

The latter blushed—blushed like a woman.

At length the excited woman asked:

"Where is my husband?"

"We will go and see," replied the Gypsy.

They went out upon the piazza.

As Mrs. Lander's eyes fell upon a tall, handsome old man, standing with Bertie clasped to his breast, she uttered one cry:

"George! my husband! Thank Heaven!"

The next moment the daughter was gently placed away, and the husband's arms opened to clasp his wife to his bosom.

Nobly the Gypsy Detective had done his work; and as he stood with arms folded, and gazed upon the happiness of those about him, a rich glow mantled his dark countenance.

For the following few weeks the Gypsy Detective had a busy time.

We must here explain that it was the detec-

ive himself who visited old Scragg's store, in the disguise of an old woman, and there not only deceived the Jew's clerk, but the burglar, Tom, and also Bartley Gray himself.

At the very time that he was in the store, old Scragg was in the Tombs.

It was also the Gypsy who deceived Tom a second time, in the saloon: and, immediately afterward, the disguise was assumed by the famous Irish Detective, who successfully played the rôle, and rescued Bertie, as described.

It was old Scragg in person who met Bartley Gray at the Jersey Ferry, but he was under surveillance at the time, and did not dare betray his secret, as the policeman who nudged against him at that time was another detective who was watching him.

Scragg, Bartley Gray, and the burglar who had assisted them, were all convicted of that robbery and attempted murder, and each of them were sentenced to State prison for twenty years.

Tom, the burglar, was sent back to serve out an unexpired sentence.

Having thus disposed of our characters, and related all of their adventures, we have nothing left but to add the usual conclusion.

## CHAPTER XLI.

ONE year subsequent to the events related in the past story, a gay party were assembled in the handsome parlors of a spacious cottage, situated on the banks of the Hudson, about twenty miles from the city of New York.

The dresses of the ladies and gentlemen, and the general hilarity, indicated that some pleasing and auspicious event was to happen.

The indications were correct.

A wedding was about to take place.

And the lovely bride-elect was none other than Bertie Lander, the beautiful young being whose early trials have been duly recorded in the incidents of our story.

And the bridegroom was whom? our dear reader, can you guess?

We *guess* that you would *guess* wrong.

It was not the Gypsy Detective, although a youth equally brave and noble, even if less expert as a detective,

It was a young man who was fast winning his way to fame in his chosen profession.

Colin Urquhardt was the fortunate youth who had successfully wooed and won the beautiful heiress, Bertie Lander; and upon the night when we reintroduce these old friends to our readers, they were to be married.

Joy and gladness prevailed on all sides.

In her chamber, surrounded by numerous friends, was the beautiful bride-elect.

Laughter and repartee passed from mouth to mouth, and from lip to lip.

The happy groom intendant protruded his handsome face inside the door.

"Oh, you villain!" shouted several of the misses; "how dare you?"

A world of happiness illumined Colin's handsome blue eyes, as he replied:

"I wish to receive my last command."

"What do you mean?" was the chorussed question.

"That the mistress commands, but the *wife obeys!*" called Colin.

"Oh, ain't you ashamed!"

The bride spoke:

"Has Mr. Tremaine arrived yet?"

"No."

"I fear that he is not coming."

"There is another train yet to-night, pretty one, that stays at the station."

"If he is not here I shall look upon it as a bad omen," said Bertie, as a shadow settled upon her handsome face.

"Well, you may rest assured that he will be here some time to-night, if he rides horseback the whole distance from the city."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because he always keeps b's word. He said that he would come, and he will be here."

The ceremony was delayed until the last moment; but at length the delay began to cause comment, and it was decided that they should wait no longer.

The wedding took place, and the guests were crowding around to congratulate the bride, when suddenly the parlor door was thrown open, and a wild-looking woman, evidently some gypsy fortune-teller, was admitted.

"Oh! mercy," cried the guests, as they shrunk away in alarm, "what creature is this?"

The bride did not show any alarm, but rushing toward the seeming gypsy woman, exclaimed:

"Oh! Mr. Tremaine, is this you?"

The old woman, straightening up, and imprinting one kiss upon the bride's fair cheek, raised her hand solemnly, and muttered some words in a strange, unknown tongue.

Immediately afterward, Colin Urquhardt advanced, and seizing the Gypsy's hand, exclaimed:

"What means this masquerading upon such an occasion as this, Phil?"

A strange light for an instant illuminated the Gypsy Detective's eyes, and then he spoke:

"Colin, my friend, I wish you happiness and joy. I am on a new scent. I could not avoid coming, as I had passed my word, and so I came in my uniform. I am on a new lay; there is no rest for me. I am on the track of the greatest mystery that ever agitated a nation. Good-bye; and it is needless to tell you that the Gypsy Detective will unravel the mystery, or lie down toes up."

All we can say is that the Gypsy Detective kept his word. He did unravel the greatest mystery of the age, and at some future time our readers shall be treated to an account of the most wonderful detective adventures that ever were placed upon record.

Adventures which were participated in by the best detectives in the country, including many of the famous officers whose exploits upon former occasions we have recorded.

And now, reader, for the present adieu.

THE END.


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Gray's face became deathly white, and his lips quivered as he said: "I will sign the papers."

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